Minister's Manual

"Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." — Jude 3

Apostolic Faith Church
5414 SE Duke Street
Portland, Oregon 97206
U.S.A.

www.apostolicfaith.org

Table of Contents

Doctrines of the Holy Scriptures

God and His Word

The Inspiration and Infallibility of Scripture 9
The Triune God 12
God the Father 13
God the Son 14
God the Holy Ghost 16

God's Relationship with Man

The Fall of Man 18
The Nature of Sin 20
The Atonement 23
Calvinism Contrasted with Arminianism 25
Repentance Toward God 26
Justification 28
Entire Sanctification, or Holiness 31
The Baptism of the Holy Ghost 34
The Church 37
Divine Healing 40

God's Plan for the Future

Signs of the End Times 44
The Rapture of the Church 47
The Marriage Supper of the Lamb 49
The Great Tribulation and the Antichrist 51
The Revelation of Christ and Armageddon 54
Christ's Millennial Reign 55
The Great White Throne Judgment 57
The New Heaven and the New Earth 58
Hell, The Place of Eternal Punishment 60
The Resurrection of the Dead 62

Biblical Ordinances

Water Baptism 64
The Lord's Supper 67
Foot Washing 69

Biblical Practices

Restitution 70
Worship 72
The Lord's Day 74

Tithes and Offerings 77
Distinction from the World 79

Biblical Perspectives

The Sanctity of Marriage 81
The Sanctity of Life 85
Human Sexuality 88
Gambling 89
Pornography 91
Use of Alcohol, Tobacco, or Controlled Substances 93
Creation 96
The Principle of Subordination 98
Appearance/Modesty 99
Evangelism – Sharing The Faith 102
Apologetics – Explaining and Defending the Faith 103

The Ministry

Ministerial Identity

The Call to Preach 105
Spiritual Qualifications 107
Personal Fitness 109
Conduct 112
Accountability to God 117
Ministerial Credentials and Ordination 119
Women Preachers 121

Ministerial Competence

Bible Study and Preparation 123
Time Management 126
Personal Growth and Development 128
Devotions and Prayer Life 130
Familiarity with Church History and Doctrine 132

Ministerial Responsibilities

Sermon Preparation 133
Sermon Delivery 136
Platform Decorum 141
Leadership 142
Connection with Headquarters 145
Support of Other Branches 147
Loyalty: Upholding Church Doctrine and Policy 149
Supporting and Participating in Church Activities 151
Leading People to Christ 153
Continuing Steadfast When Facing Challenges 156

Civic Responsibilities 158
Counseling 159
Conflict Resolution 162
Ministering to the Sick and Shut-In 165
The Ministry of Comfort 171
Pastoral Transfers 174
Retirement and Transitioning to a Supporting Role 177

Ministerial Relationships

Relationship with Spouse 179
Relationship with Children and Family 182
Relationship with Other Ministers 185
Relationship with Workers in the Church 188
Relationship with the Congregation 191
Relationship with Individuals with Specific Needs 193

Administrative Work of a Pastor

Personal Financial Stewardship 198
Appointing Church Workers 202
Supervision of Outreach Efforts 204
Literature Distribution 206
Promotion of Church Events 208
Oversight of Church Finances 212
Acquisition and Care of Church Property 216
Evaluating and Training Ministerial Candidates 218
Working with Committees 222

Public Services

General Instructions for Services

Overview of Church Services 223
Welcoming Visitors 227
Prayer Before the Service 228
Opening the Service and Announcements 229
Music in the Service 230
Prayer in the Service 233
Public Reading of Scripture 234
Personal Testimonies 235
The Message 236
The Altar Service 238

Types of Services

Sunday Morning Service 240
Evangelistic Services 241
Sunday School 242

Children's Church....246
Youth Services....248
Holiday and Special Occasion Services....250
Concerts....254
Outreach Services....256
Church Dedication Services....259
Church Anniversary Services....261
Bible Teaching Services....263
Prayer Meetings....265
Water Baptismal Services....266
Lord's Supper Services....268
Foot Washing....270
Baby Dedications....272
Youth Camps....273
Vacation Bible Schools....278
Special or Combined Meetings....281
In New Fields....283
Ordination and Installation Services....286
Ministers Meetings....288
Workers' Meetings....289

Marriage Ceremonies

General Instructions Regarding Marriage Ceremonies....291
Premarital Counseling....294
Wedding Preliminaries and Rehearsal....298
The Wedding Ceremony....299
Ceremony Wording....301
The Wedding Reception....303
Marriage Vow Renewal Services....304
Support of the Separated or Divorced....307

Funeral Services

General Instructions for Funerals....309
Specific Types of Funerals....314
Selected Scriptures for Comfort and Reassurance....317

Church Organization and Administration

About the Organization

Our Foundation....321
Our Mission....322
Our Name....323
Our Logo....325
Our Motto....326

Denominational Characteristics....327
Church Incorporation....329
Constitution and Bylaws....330
Church Branches....331
Church Property....333
Church Membership....335
Church Camp Meetings....337
Church Literature....338
Church Website....339
Operational Budget....340
Compassionate Outreaches....341
Christian School Ministries....342

Organizational Structure and roles

Overview of Organizational Structure....343
Superintendent General....345
Board of Trustees....346
Secretary and Treasurer....348
Regional Directors....349
District Superintendents....350
Pastors....351
Associate Pastors and Other Ministers....352
Elders and Workers....353
Committees....354

Legal Considerations

General Legal Advice....355
Emergency Preparedness....357
Public Safety Issues....360
Tax and Financial Issues....364
Insurance Issues....365
Physical Property Issues....366
Copyright Issues....367

God and His Word

The Inspiration and Infallibility of Scripture

The Bible is the inspired Word of God to man, and the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct for Christians. It provides directives from God concerning how He is to be worshiped and served, and is all sufficient to instruct and guide man in the ways of righteousness.

We place implicit trust in the inerrant nature of sacred Scripture, believing that the Bible gives a true history of the creation of the heavens, the earth, and of the human race, and accurately foretells the destiny of humanity and all things.

The Bible is comprised of the Old and New Testaments, which are titles for the old and new covenants between God and man. The old covenant includes the Mosaic law.[1] The Commandments, the rituals of the sacrificial system, and the prophets all foreshadowed and/or foretold the way to salvation and forgiveness of sin. When Jesus gave His life on the cross as the Perfect Sacrifice, He fulfilled the law and the prophets, and inaugurated the new covenant (Hebrews 9:11-15). The veil between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies in the Temple was torn in two as physical evidence that the way for direct access to God had been opened. At that pivotal moment in the history of humanity, redeeming grace through Jesus Christ became the agency of restoration between God and man.

In upholding the Old and New Testaments as the only authoritative source for all matters of belief, teaching, and life, we are following the expressed will of Jesus, the Apostles, and the early church. Jesus recognized the Old Testament as the Word of God, giving it His full sanction and paying it the highest honor by quoting extensively from it during His ministry. He referred to it as the Scriptures and indicated that they were authored by God himself.[2]

The Apostles and believers of the Early Church also quoted from the Old Testament and stated that it was authoritative on all questions of faith, designating it as the Scripture.[3] They claimed for the New Testament writings the same divine authority, inspiration, and infallibility.[4]

In addition to the testimony of Jesus Christ and the Apostles, there are other internal evidences that the Bible is truly God's Word, and thus, the one absolute authority. The content of the Bible itself indicates its divine origin. The sixty-six books forming the Old and New Testaments were written over a period of approximately 1600 years, by nearly forty authors, in three different languages and in a variety of social, economic, geographic, and political conditions. It consists of history, prophecy, poetry/music, moral imperatives, literature, and more, addressing a multitude of issues. Yet, it is one unified Book—from beginning to end, the Bible remains consistent in theme and message, and free of contradictions.

Additional internal evidence is found in the prophecies within its pages. The Old Testament contains hundreds of predictions concerning individual nations, cities, and peoples, as well as more than three hundred prophecies concerning Jesus Christ. Detailed descriptions of where Jesus would be born, His lineage, His death, and His resurrection were fulfilled hundreds of years later exactly as they had been foretold. There is no more reasonable way to explain the fulfilled prophecies of the Bible than divine origin.

External evidence also proves the veracity of Scriptures, one such evidence being the Bible's historicity. The events recorded are subject to the same type of verification as any other historical document. Both archaeological findings and ancient writings have repeatedly corroborated the accuracy of Biblical accounts, making it the best documented book from the ancient world. The fact that the historical records validate the Bible substantiates the Christian persuasion that its doctrinal precepts are also true and divinely inspired.

In addition, external evidence is found in the indestructibility of the Bible. The Bible is the most well-known book in the history of the world, and no book has been more widely attacked. Rulers, secular and religious, have attempted to keep its spread under control or destroy it, yet it is unrivaled in its distribution. Skeptics have decried it as mythology, opponents have disparaged its message as primitive and outdated, and the secular press and academia have subjected it to every kind of scrutiny possible. Despite all these attempts to disprove or discredit it, the Bible remains steadfast in its authority. Clearly, the Word of God has been supernaturally protected.

Finally, there is the incontestable evidence of the transforming ability of the Bible. Countless lives have been turned around through obedience to the words of this Book. Hardened criminals have been instantly reformed, addicts have been delivered from addictions in a moment of time, men and women who were full of hatred and anger have been filled with love and forgiveness. No other book can make such a claim; only the Word of God has the power to supernaturally change hearts and lives.

[1] See Exodus 24:3-8; Deuteronomy 31:24-26; 2 Kings 23:2.

[2] Matthew 21:42; 22:29-32; Mark 12:26

[3] Romans 4:3; 15:4; 16:26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:1921

[4]John 20:30-31; Ephesians 3:15; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 3:1-2,15-16

Counsel for Ministers

The Old Testament was written primarily in Hebrew, with a few sections in Aramaic, and the New Testament was first written in Greek. Since most of us cannot read the Scriptures in these original languages, we must use a translation. While many versions of the Bible are now available in the English language, in the Apostolic Faith organization we rely upon the King James Version of the Bible for use in our services and as our primary source for study. All references in our printed publications and on our website are taken from the King James Version.

The King James text has faithfully served the English-speaking Body of Christ for more than four hundred years. Translators of the King James Version took the underlying Hebrew and Greek words, and attempted to translate them into the closest corresponding English word or words of that time. Meticulous care was taken to carefully preserve and accurately transcribe the original texts. Other translations often are more interpretative, taking the original thoughts and expressing them in current vernacular. Still other translations are essentially paraphrases.

In the 1880s, the Revised Version of the King James translation was produced, and most modern English translations are based upon this text. Words, sentences, and even entire verses in the King James Version were removed in the Revised Version. One example is found in Matthew 19:9. In the King James text, this verse reads: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." In many newer versions, the final phrase, "and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery," is completely omitted. Most of the modern versions also change the word "fornication" to "uncleanness" or "unfaithfulness," and then use this verse to suggest that an individual can put away one's spouse for unfaithfulness, suggesting that one is free to marry another, though doing so would constitute adultery.

There may be times in our personal study when we will find it helpful to review additional translations in order to broaden our understanding of a particular passage, but we must always be aware that translations

are only as good as the theology of the translator. We may also wish to refer to commentaries, study Bibles, or online sources for background information, amplification regarding setting, or the meaning for a word in the original language.

For those whose native language is not English, we recommend that you attempt to find a Bible version in your own language that is a word for word translation of the original languages, and one that was translated by individuals with an experiential knowledge of salvation and who ascribe to the Wesleyan view of holiness.

The Triune God

The Divine Trinity (also referred to as the Holy Trinity, the Godhead, or the Triune God) consists of three Persons in one who are equally and eternally the one true God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These are separate and distinct Persons, possessing recognizable personalities and qualities, perfectly united in one. They are not to be thought of, in any sense, as merely three names for one Person, three independent Persons, or three modes of manifestation.

While the term "trinity" is not found in the Bible, the doctrine of the triunity of God, which the term designates, is clearly presented throughout the Scriptures. Many irrefutable passages in God's Word teach this distinction of Persons in the Godhead. Examples in which the triune nature of God is expressed in specific terms of relationship as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit include the annunciation to Mary (Luke 1:35), the account of the baptism of Jesus in Jordan, where the Father spoke from Heaven and the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17), the baptismal formula given by Jesus to His disciples (Matthew 28:19), and Jesus' descriptions of the Holy Spirit's work (John 14:26; 15:26).

The plural form of the name of God, *Elohim*, occurs in many Scriptures.[1] Other references to or inferences of the triune nature of God include: the threefold ascription of praise;[2] the prophetic commission of Jesus as the Messiah;[3] the blessing pronounced upon the saints at Corinth by Paul the Apostle;[4] and the exhortations and salutations of the New Testament writers.[5] Numerous passages identify both the Father and the Son.[6] Other places in Scripture speak of the Son and the Holy Spirit as distinctly as they do of the Father.[7]

We see in Scripture attributes or actions of the Father which establish Him as the Father and not the Son; there are attributes or actions ascribed to the Son which are not ascribed to the Father; and there are attributes or actions ascribed to the Holy Spirit that are not ascribed to the Father or the Son. Despite their individual roles, the three members of the Godhead are in a perfect and complete state of unity as to nature, relationship, cooperation, and authority; there is only one God. No Person in the Godhead either exists or operates separately or independently of the others.

[1] For example, Genesis 1:1,26; 11:7 and Isaiah 6:8.

[2] Isaiah 6:3 and Revelation 4:8

[3] Isaiah 48:16

[4] 2 Corinthians 13:14

[5] For example, Ephesians 2:18; 2 Peter 1:2; and Revelation 1:4-5.

[6] For example, John 1:18 and 1 John 1:3-4.

[7] For example, Genesis 1:2; 6:3; Psalm 2:7; Proverbs 30:4; and Joel 2:28.

God the Father

God the Father is a Person whose existence is indisputably proved by His Word and by His works. (A description of God the Father necessarily overlaps with a description of the Triune God. This segment should be considered with the segment on the Triune God, and also the segments on the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.) There is but one true and living God. He is the Supreme Being—not merely a different type of being or a superior being, but *the* Supreme Being, owing His existence to nothing or no one beyond himself. As the first Person of the Trinity, He is eternal in existence, as He had no beginning and will never cease to exist.[1] He is omnipotent, or all-powerful; [2] He is omniscient, knowing all things;[3] and He is omnipresent, or not limited to any particular geographical place or spatial location, but is everywhere at the same time.[4]

We read in John 4:24 that "God is a Spirit," which means that He is a living Being who is infinite and free of all limitations, having none of the physical constraints associated with matter. He possesses and exercises the functions of a rational and intelligent nature; and possesses moral attributes such as holiness, righteousness, goodness, grace, mercy, and truth, each of which is infinite in extent and degree in Him. Scripture states that "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16), indicating that love is a central attribute of God.

Many Biblical passages indicate that God is personal in nature. He has self-awareness, a will, and feelings; He makes choices, and relates to other personal beings. His actions and responses are also indicative of personality.

God the Father is the unseen Creator of all things, visible and invisible.[5] While the triune God was active in all the works relative to creation and redemption, it was the Father who was primary in the institution of the redemptive plan of salvation.[6] He is the one to whom the redeemed are reconciled through the atoning work of Jesus Christ, His Son.[7]

Along with the other Persons of the Divine Trinity, God the Father is immanent, or present throughout the universe but also transcendent, or existing apart from the universe.[8] He declares of Himself, "I am the Lord, I change not," (Malachi 3:6), indicating that He is immutable, or unchanging.

[1] Psalm 90:2; 102:24-27; Revelation 1:8; 4:8

[2] Job 42:2; Matthew 19:26

[3] Psalm 147:5; Romans 11:33-36; Hebrews 4:13

[4] Psalm 139:7-10; 2 Chronicles 6:18; Acts 17:27.

[5] Genesis 1:1; Exodus 20:11; Nehemiah 9:6; Colossians 1:16; 1 Corinthians 8:6

[6] 1 Corinthians 2:7-8; Titus 1:2

[7] 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; John 6:37-38; 17:4-7

[8] Psalm 104:2-3; Isaiah 57:15; Psalm 113:4-6

God the Son

The Eternal Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the second Person of the Godhead. (A description of God the Son necessarily overlaps with a description of the Triune God. This segment should be considered with the segment on the Triune God, and also the segments on God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit.) His relationship with the Father had no beginning, but existed from eternity.[1] He declares himself to be one with the Father, saying, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30). Scripture clearly indicates the distinctions between God the Father and His Son.[2]

Scripture identifies the Lord Jesus Christ as the Word, saying "the Word was God" (John 1:1). In John 1:14 we read, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." John clearly asserts that the Word (translated from the Greek *Logos*, which philosophers of the time identified as the principle of order and knowledge, or the divine animating principle which pervades the universe), was God, and that Jesus of Nazareth was the incarnation of this Logos or Word. Old Testament prophecies of Christ announce His deity, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). In the New Testament, the disciple Thomas declared to Jesus, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28), and Jesus did not challenge that statement. The apostle Paul describes Him as, "…the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). So we can see that Scripture clearly teaches that Jesus Christ, who took man's nature and was born of a virgin, possessed two whole and perfect natures. The Lord Jesus Christ, who always was truly God, became truly man as well.

His divine nature is shown in many passages of Scripture, especially in those where He is called the Son of God, and also in those passages where divine attributes, names, and titles are given or ascribed to Him.[3] His human nature is, likewise, shown clearly and distinctly. As a general rule, in those passages where He called Himself the Son of Man, He did so to show His humanity.[4]

The historical fact that Jesus Christ was truly a man who walked on the earth in Israel two thousand years ago is well-established. Our Lord took human form voluntarily, being born of the Virgin Mary as prophesied in the Scriptures.[5] His purpose in coming to the world was to redeem man from his fallen state through His substitutionary work on the cross. He knew from before time began the price He must pay for our redemption.[6] His divine nature was exemplified by the fact that He lived a sinless life on this earth.[7] He suffered, was crucified, died and was buried, and afterward rose again from the dead, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). After His ascension, He took his rightful place "on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3), where He continually "maketh intercession for us" (Romans 8:34).[8] He will one day return to this earth, where He will rule and reign in righteousness.[9]

Many divine works are ascribed to Jesus Christ: the work of creation;[10] healing of the sick;[11] and the forgiveness of sins.[12] He accepted worship while on earth and will be worshiped by angels, together with every creature in the universe.[13] As the second Person of the Divine Trinity, he is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. He is immutable [unchanging] in His person, purposes, and nature.[14] His deity is seen in the authority He had while on earth in human form, as well as in the part He will take in the events leading up to the final dissolution of this earth and the establishing of the New Heaven and the new earth.[15]

[1] Micah 5:2; John 1:1; 8:58; 17:5.

[2] Matthew 11:25; 17:5; Luke 23:46; John 5:37; Romans 1:7; Hebrews 1:1-2

[3] Luke 1:35; John 10:34-36; Romans 1:4; Galatians 4:4; Hebrews 1:15; Revelation 19:16

[4] Romans 8:3; Philippians 2:7-8; Hebrews 2:14-18

[5] Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:26-35

[6] Luke 24: 44-47; Acts 2:23; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 2:16-17; 1 Peter 1:19-20

[7] 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22

[8] See also Hebrews 7:25.

[9] Jeremiah 23:5; Matthew 24:44; 1 Timothy 6:14-15; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Titus 2:13

[10] John 1:3,10; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2,10

[11] Some examples are found in Matthew 4:23; 11:4-5; Acts 10:38; of course there are many more.

[12] Matthew 9:2; Luke 7:48-49; Colossians 3:13

[13] Isaiah 45:23; Matthew 2:11; 14:33; Luke 24:51-52; Romans 14:11-12; Philippians 2:10; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 5:11-14

[14] Hebrews 1:11-12; 13:8

[15] Romans 14:8-10; Philippians 3:20-21; Revelation 21:5, 22-23

God the Holy Ghost

The Holy Ghost, also referred to in Scripture as the Holy Spirit, is the third Person in the Trinity. (A description of God the Holy Ghost necessarily overlaps with a description of the Triune God. This segment should be considered with the segment on the Triune God, and also the segments on God the Father, and God the Son.) The Holy Ghost must be recognized and honored as such, and never referred to as a force, a thing, or "it." God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are coequal, and the Holy Spirit possesses the same divine attributes of eternal existence,[1] omnipresence,[2] omniscience,[3] and omnipotence[4] as the other two Persons of the Divine Trinity.

The Holy Spirit has many roles ascribed to Him. He is the agent that leads men to repentance.[5] He proclaims Jesus and glorifies Him; He does not draw attention to or glorify Himself.[6] Scripture teaches that the Holy Spirit ministers to believers. He is the specific agent in the world to lead believers into deeper experiences with God,[7] to call and empower disciples for service,[8] and to lead individuals into all truth.[9] He bestows spiritual gifts, "dividing to every man severally as he will" (see 1 Corinthians 12:8-11). He produces spiritual fruit in Christ's followers,[10] and assists them in prayer.[11]

The fact of the distinct personality of the Holy Ghost is emphatically taught in Scripture. Personal pronouns are applied to Him.[12] Personal qualities, such as active intelligence, volition, and the capability of being resisted, grieved, blasphemed, lied to, or tempted, are ascribed to Him.[13] Many personal acts are performed by Him.[14]

His deity is unquestionable, because divine names are given to Him,[15] divine attributes are ascribed to Him,[16] divine works are performed by Him.[17]

Jesus Himself promised that He would send the Holy Spirit to the disciples, referring to the Holy Spirit as "the Spirit of truth" (John 16:13), "the Comforter" (John 14:26; 16:7), and "the Holy Ghost" (Acts 1:8).

[1] Hebrews 9:14

[2] Psalm 139:7-10; John 14:17

[3] 1 Corinthians 2:10-11; John 14:26; 16:12-13

[4] Luke 1:35; 1 Corinthians 12:11; Romans 8:11; 15:19

[5] John 16:7-8

[6] John 16:13-15

[7] 1 Corinthians 2:11-12; 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13

[8] Acts 1:8; 6:3; 13:2-4; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

[9] John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16

[10] Galatians 5:22

[11] Romans 8:26; 1 Corinthians 14:14-15

[12] Many examples can be found in John chapters 14 through 16.

[13] Isaiah 63:10; Matthew 12:31-32; Acts 5:3-4; 7:51; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11

[14] Matthew 10:20; John 16:13; Acts 8:29; 10:19; Romans 8:26; 15:19

[15] Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Hebrews 9:14

[16] Psalm 139:710; Romans 8:26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10

[17] Genesis 1:2; Psalm 104:30; John 3:5-6; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 3:18

God's Relationship with Man

The Fall of Man

Man was created with a righteous nature, for Genesis 1:27 tells us, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." However, though Adam and Eve possessed a pure bias or inclination to do right, there existed in them the potential to do otherwise. Their free will and rational capacities made it possible for them to choose wrongly, and when faced with the temptation described in Genesis 3, they chose to yield.

The third chapter of Genesis depicts the separation of humankind from God, as the beauty of the creation account related in the first two chapters of Genesis was marred by disobedience, guilt, punishment, and eventually, death.

The original sin was an act of free will in which the man and woman that God had created in His own image deliberately, responsibly, and with adequate understanding of the consequences, chose to disobey the single restraint God had placed upon them. God's commandment that they were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil constituted no deprivation, but it did represent man's subordination to God's authority. Their act of defiance and self-will corrupted the holy character with which God originally had endowed them.

It is important to note that the woman was tempted from the outside, by the devil's insinuation, rather than from any evil inclination or moral defect. Satan preyed upon her natural, God-given desires (physical hunger, the appeal of beauty, a desire for knowledge). By sowing doubt as to the truth of God's word and maligning His character and motives, Satan enticed the woman to disobey God and to encourage her husband to do likewise.

As a result of their disobedience in the Garden, Adam and Eve lost their state of innocence and holiness, and were separated from God. Their choice, which plunged all their descendants into a depraved condition, is referred to as the Fall of Man.

There were immediate consequences as a result of the Fall. The relationship that Adam and Eve had previously experienced with God was severed. Their nature was changed from one of righteousness to one of corruption. God had ordained that "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17), so from that point forward, man would experience spiritual death and physical death. Ultimately, barring intervention by some redemptive force, both of these deaths would become eternal in nature.

As punishment, God declared that the serpent would be cursed; the woman would know sorrow in childbearing, and would be in subjection to and dependent upon her husband; the ground would be cursed; all of nature would suffer; man would be required to toil in sorrow to make a living; and Adam and Eve would be banished from the Garden.[1]

One of the clear lessons in the first chapter of Genesis is that like produces like. Repeatedly the Bible states that each living plant and creature reproduced after its kind. That also became true of fallen man. Genesis 5:3 says, "And Adam . . . begat a son in his own likeness, after his image." The children born into this world of Adam were in his image, not God's image. Because of the Fall, Adam's original sin was transmitted to the human race, so every person born into the world has an unholy inclination and moral basis.[2] John 3:6 states, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." The Bible makes it very clear that, as a result of being born with a sinful nature, every individual also eventually chooses sin.

[1] See Genesis 3:14-19, 24.

[2] See Romans 5:12-21; 6:23; and 1 Corinthians 15:21-22.

The Nature of Sin

The word *sin* is a religious term that indicates both willful, defiant acts that transgress divine law, and the underlying condition of opposition to divine law from which those sinful acts spring. (The "law" in this usage is the divine principle of basic right and wrong, not "the Law" as the Old Testament ceremonial and sacrificial system.) Sin separates man from God, and is the root of all opposition to and conflict with Him.

Sin is universal. The Bible is clear that every person born into this world is a sinner by birth (Psalm 51:5) and by choice (Romans 3:23).

The first usage in Scripture of the word *sin* is found in Genesis 4:7. In the original Hebrew, the word translated as *sin* meant "an offence." A number of other words are also translated *sin* in the Scriptures. For example, the Greek word *harmartia* means "to miss the mark," and implies an inward condition of sin out of which acts of sin originate.[1] *Asebeia*, also translated *ungodliness* (see Romans 1:18), denotes a refusal to worship God as God. *Parabisis* has the meaning of "going aside," and refers to a definite breach or transgression of God's law.[2] Other words translated *sin* express the condition of being unpersuadable, a refusal to hear, lawlessness, and unbelief.

The topic of sin is mentioned hundreds of times in the Bible, starting with the original sin when Adam and Eve ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. In that first act of rebellion against God, Adam and Eve deliberately chose to do wrong. As a result, the pure nature with which they had been created was corrupted, and their sinful nature was transmitted to all of their descendants. Thus, sin can describe either a state of being or an act of transgressing. Because of the sinful nature inherited from Adam, the entire human race is instinctively inclined toward evil from the moment of birth.[3] As individuals grow and begin making conscious choices regarding their behavior, each one eventually chooses to do wrong and commits acts of sin.

The Word of God describes sin as the "transgression" of God's law (1 John 3:4), and in 1 John 5:17, we read, "All unrighteousness is sin." Many specific evils are identified in the New Testament as sinful. Some of these include: adultery, fornication, murder (Mark 7:21); thievery, greed, deceit, lust, envy, blasphemy, pride (Mark 7:22); homosexuality (Romans 1:26-27); malice, malignity (Romans 1:29); backbiting, spite, pride, lying, disobedience (Romans 1:30); lack of mercy (Romans 1:31); vengeance (Romans 12:17); immorality, impurity, indecency, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, hostility, heresy (Galatians 5:19-20); unbelief (Hebrews 3:12); hypocrisy (1 Peter 2:1); and rebellion (2 Peter 2:10).[4]

It is important to recognize that there is a difference between acts of sin, and actions that are the result of human behavior or infirmity, rather than moral failure. To commit an act of sin, there must be both knowledge of the law of God and a willful and defiant breaking of that law; such actions spring from the carnal nature. However, there may be other actions that spring from human frailties or limitations that are not themselves sinful. The physical, emotional, and mental capacities of man were affected by the fall, and at times strain, exhaustion, disease, or mistakes in judgment can result in offenses, or other manifestations of human weakness. Age-related infirmity or dementia can also distort judgment and result in actions for which the individual is not responsible.

The Bible also makes a distinction between sin and temptation.[5] Temptation itself is not sin; *yielding* to temptation is sin. God does not forsake His own because they are tempted. Rather, He gives the grace and strength to stand fast in times of temptation.

Scripture teaches that it is possible for individuals to live lives free from sin, stating unequivocally that "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin" (1 John 3:9; see also verses 4-10). Zacharias, speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, spoke of God's promise "that we . . . might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life" (Luke 1:74-75). Jesus told the woman taken in adultery, "Go and sin no more" (John 8:11). He came to break the power of sin, for we read, "He shall save

his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21; see also 1 John 3:8). Paul asked the question in Romans 6:11-18, "What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?" His emphatic answer, "God forbid," is clear evidence that it is God's will for every Christian to live victoriously without sin.

While a victorious life without sin is possible, the Bible is clear in affirming that the relationship with God can be severed. Individuals who have been born again can choose to go back into sin, the same as Adam and Eve in their righteous state chose to commit sin. The prophet Ezekiel addressed this issue when he said, "When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die" (Ezekiel 18:26). However, it is possible for one who has turned away from God to be restored again to salvation and a right relationship with God. We read, "If he [the wicked] turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; if the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die (Ezekiel 33:14-15).

Scriptures warn that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Sin that is not repented of will lead to eternal separation from God and eternal punishment.

[1] Paul frequently used this word. See Romans 3:9; 5:12-20; 5:13; 6:1-2; 7:7-9, 11 and others.

[2] Some examples of its use are found in Romans 4:15 and Hebrews 2:2; 9:15.

[3] See Psalm 51:5; John 3:6-7; Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22; Galatians 3:22; Ephesians 2:13.

[4] There are other sinful deeds identified in Scripture, but even this relatively short list establishes the kind of behavior that cannot exist in a Christian life.

[5] The word *temptation* in this context refers to an allurement to sin. The same word is also used at times to mean the trial or testing of our faith. We find an illustration of the two different usages in James 1. By reading verses 3-4, we can see that the "divers temptations" mentioned in verse 2 refer to the testing of our faith. Verse 14, however, refers to the testing of our integrity, as evidenced by verse 15. God promises in every temptation [trial or testing of our faith] to make "a way to escape," that we may be able to bear it (1 Corinthians 10:13), but we must flee temptation that is an enticement to sin.

Counsel for Ministers

It may be difficult at times to distinguish between actions that spring from the carnal nature, and those that are done as a result of human infirmity. It is important to remember that sin is an act of deliberate enmity and rebellion toward God. We must point individuals to the vital necessity of being honest with themselves and with God, who alone knows the heart. If a person has committed an act of willful defiance toward God, he must not rationalize or excuse his behavior, but acknowledge and repent of his wrongdoing before God. Neglect, or an incremental lessening of commitment to God, can also result in a state of sinfulness. Estrangement from God can be the product of drifting with disinterest into a lukewarm condition with a seared conscience.

We must take care that references to the "flesh" are based upon an accurate understanding of the word itself. The word flesh, translated from the Greek word sarx, can refer to human nature, with its physical, mental, and emotional limitations, or it can refer to the sinful (carnal) nature. Paul uses sarx at times, (for example, in Romans 1:3 and 9:3) when he was referring to nothing more than the human condition. In other

places, such as throughout Romans 7 and 8, sarx bears strong moral implications. In those instances and many others, the sinful nature is contrasted with the spiritual nature which has been purged from sin. When the word is used in a moral sense, the flesh can be purified through entire sanctification. On the other hand, when used to describe the human condition, the flesh is describing the fact that we remain mortal beings subject to physical, mental, and emotional limitations, which often have no moral bearing.

We teach that infants and young children who have not reached the age of accountability are covered by the Atoning Blood, the same as we who have come under its pardoning influences through repentance and the exercise of faith in God. "By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men . . ." (Romans 5:18). These who are innocent of acts of defiance to God have not yet rejected the free gift offered to all and are therefore covered by the Blood. If they die in that state of innocence they are immediately received into the presence of God to enjoy His fellowship forever.

The Atonement

The atonement of Jesus Christ is a theme that runs through the entire Bible, perhaps occupying more space in the Holy Scriptures than any other single subject. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word translated *atonement* literally means "a covering." Figuratively, it carries the thought of appeasement, pardoning, purging, and reconciling. In the New Testament, the word *atonement* is found only once, in Romans 5:11; the Greek word is translated *reconciliation* in other instances. Both terms indicate the reconciliation of man to God made possible through the Perfect Sacrifice, Jesus Christ. Without the covering for sin provided through Jesus' death, there could be no possibility of reconciliation. Thus, the atonement is fundamental to the Gospel message; it makes forgiveness for sins possible.

The nature of the atonement can be described in specific words which point to Christ's vicarious accomplishments: sacrifice, redemption, propitiation, reconciliation, and substitution.

Sacrifice: The sacrifice of Jesus Christ was repeatedly promised for the salvation of fallen humanity, beginning with Genesis 3:15, for Christ was "…the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). It was prefigured in the ceremonial sacrifices of the Levitical Law and Tabernacle worship,[1] and emphasized in prophecy from the Garden of Eden to the Cross.[2] These promises, types, and prophecies were interpreted for us through the writings of the New Testament authors.[3]

Redemption: In the New Testament, three different Greek words are translated *redemption*: *agorazo*, which means "to purchase in the market," *exagorazo*, which means "to purchase out of the market," and *lutroo*, which means "to loosen and set free."

The concept of redemption, as explained in Leviticus 25:47-49, has to do with the setting free through the payment of a ransom price or penalty one who is enslaved. Christ, through His death on the cross, paid the price for us who were "sold under sin" (Romans 7:14). We are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver or gold, but "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18-20). If a slave in Old Testament times preferred to remain a slave, redemption was not forced upon him, and the same is true of the redemption offered by Jesus Christ. Sinners must accept the provision Christ made for their deliverance, or receive eternal damnation.[4]

Propitiation: The Bible plainly teaches that Christ died as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. The word *propitiation* signifies expiation, or making amends for wrongdoing or guilt. God is eternally righteous, and because of His righteousness, He cannot overlook sin or excuse the guilty—doing so would compromise His righteous nature. Justice demands that a penalty be paid for an offense, so Christ died in our stead, suffering the penalty for our sins. The Innocent Blood was shed for us, that we, the guilty ones, might be pardoned and made free.[5] Christ's death was the conciliation or appeasement by which it becomes consistent with God's character and government to pardon sinners.

Reconciliation: The concept of reconciliation is also a theme of the Atonement, and is closely related to propitiation in regard to what it accomplishes. Adam's sin separated or alienated man from God (see Isaiah 59:2), but Jesus' death brought about reconciliation between God and man. We read in Colossians 1:21-22, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight."[6]

Substitution: The substitutionary aspect of the Atonement was clearly prefigured in the Old Testament. When God chose the harmless, gentle lamb as the principal animal for sacrifice, He was teaching His people that they were forgiven and spared only because innocent blood was shed in their stead. The scapegoat taken into the wilderness on the annual Day of Atonement represented Christ, who took the condemnation and curse of sin upon Himself. The slaying of the Passover lamb (see Exodus 12:3-7) looked ahead to the time when Christ, our Passover Lamb, was "sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7).[7] All the types and shadows

recorded in the Old Testament found their culmination at Calvary, when Christ "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18).

The Atonement provides for sanctification. We read, "Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Hebrews 13:12). Sanctification completely eradicates and destroys the nature of sin, cleansing from all carnality and making one holy within.[8]

Divine healing is also included in the Atonement of Christ, for we read in Isaiah 53:5 that "with his stripes we are healed." That thought is repeated by Peter when he said of Christ, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:24).[9]

There is wonderful power in the Blood of the Lamb. Through the Blood, we overcome temptation, adversity, and oppression (see Revelation 12:10-11). We are strengthened, spiritually and physically, by the Blood of the Holy One. The Blood is essential and can never be set aside or replaced.

[1] Exodus 12:13; Leviticus 1:14; 6:6-7; 16:15-17

[2] Psalm 22:16-18; Isaiah 53:112; Zechariah 11:12; 13:6

[3] John 3:14-15 in reference to Numbers 21:8-9; Hebrews 13:11-12; 1 Peter 1:1012

[4] Passages that deal with the death of Christ as a ransom for sinners include Matthew 20:28; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Galatians 3:13.

[5] Romans 3:25-26; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 2:2; 4:10

[6] See also Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; and Ephesians 2:14-16.

[7] Scriptures emphasizing the substitutionary aspect of Christ's death include Isaiah 53:6; Luke 22:19-20; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 2:9; and 1 Peter 2:24.

[8] See the section of this manual on *Entire Sanctification* for a more complete summary of this subject.

[9] It is clearly shown by Matthew 8:16-17 that this includes healing of physical ailments and disease. See the section of this manual on *Divine Healing* for a more complete summary of this subject.

Counsel for Ministers

Extreme Calvinistic teaching holds that Christ died only for the elect, using the truth of God's perfect foreknowledge to set forth the mistaken idea of a limited Atonement. This teaching stipulates that Christ died for chosen people who had been given to Him by the Father. Scripture, however, is clear that Christ died for all. We read that "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11-14; see also John 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:3-6; Hebrews 2:9 and 2 Peter 3:9). However, while the extent of Christ's sacrifice is unlimited, the Atonement is conditional upon the repentance of man. As free moral agents, people can reject the grace of God and refuse to avail themselves of the benefits of Christ's atonement, but the provision of salvation is universal.

For a description of the distinction between Calvinistic and Arminian teachings, refer to the following section.

Calvinism Contrasted with Arminianism

Within the broad scope of Christian theology, Arminianism and Calvinism share both history and many Biblical doctrines. However, they offer radically different interpretations of Scriptures related to salvation through Jesus Christ. In addition, there are a variety of approaches under the general headings of Calvinism and Arminianism; proponents on both sides are not in universal agreement regarding how they apply these doctrines.

Calvinism, which is built upon the religious teachings of John Calvin (1509-1564), emphasizes the sovereignty of God and the salvation of the elect (those He has predetermined will be saved) by God's grace alone.

Arminianism is based upon the original beliefs of the theologian Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), but can also include teachings of John Wesley and others. The Apostolic Faith subscribes most closely to the Wesleyan view of Arminianism.

In his written works, Arminius quotes from Christian theologians dating back to the first century who taught that grace is extended to all, but that man, by his own free will, may turn toward or away from the faith. He also demonstrated that there were Christian leaders in every age since the time of Christ who taught that man can and should live holy in this life.

Following is a chart that briefly states the five main points of difference between Calvinistic teaching and Arminian teaching.

Calvinism	Arminianism
Total Depravity: Man is born with a depraved nature and lacks a free will. God draws to repentance only those He has predetermined for salvation.	**Free Will:** Man is born with a depraved nature but has a free will. God draws all to repentance, but man can choose to repent and be regenerated, or resist and perish.
Unconditional Election: God has chosen only certain individuals for salvation. The elect are those God has predetermined will be saved.	**Conditional Election:** God has chosen all humanity for salvation. The elect are those who respond to His offer of salvation with repentance and faith.
Limited Atonement: When Christ gave His life upon the Cross, atonement was made available but only for the elect.	**Unlimited Atonement:** When Christ gave His life upon the Cross, atonement was made available for everyone. However, atonement avails only for those who choose to accept Christ's provision.
Irresistible Grace: Grace is extended only to the elect. God's call cannot be resisted and always results in conversion.	**Resistible Grace:** Grace is extended to all. Man is free to accept or reject God's call. Conversion results when man believes and receives God's offered grace.
Perseverance of the Saints: Saved individuals retain their salvation to the end because they are preserved by God. No saved person will ever be lost; once an individual is saved, he is always saved.	**Assurance and Security:** Saved individuals can retain their salvation to the end through continued obedience and faithfulness to God. However, saved individuals can forfeit their salvation by turning away from God.

Repentance Toward God

Repentance is godly sorrow for sin with a renunciation of sin. It goes beyond mere regret or even sincere remorse. In the Old Testament, the word translated repent means "to turn back; to change one's mind." The Greek word translated *repentance* in the New Testament means "compunction for guilt," and by implication, "reversal." Thus, the Biblical concept of repentance indicates a change of mind that results in a reversal of action or direction.[1]

Acknowledging one's sin is a starting point, but confession alone does not necessarily indicate true repentance. Sometimes when an individual is apprehended in a sin or is facing the consequences of wrongdoings, he will admit his misdeed but still experience no remorse. There is a vast difference between the person who is sorry because he or she was caught, and the one who is sincerely penitent before God even when the sins are not known publically.

The Bible is full of exhortations to repentance.[2] When a person comes to the Lord to be saved, he is desperately in need of forgiveness. His sins separate him from God and if not forgiven, will cause him to go into a lost eternity. A truly repentant individual experiences a deep distaste for sin and a heartfelt desire to be completely forgiven by God at any cost. Repentance is the sinner's key to the Kingdom of Heaven—it is the only way to approach God and receive divine favor.[3] Forgiveness does not come until the sinner repents and completely renounces his rebellion against God, asking for forgiveness.

Genuine, heartfelt repentance is not a mere ritual; the emotions, intellect, and will are all involved. A sinner's emotions are evidenced by a feeling of revulsion and personal accountability for sinning against God. The intellect brings about a change of mind, attitude, and purpose. Finally, the will makes a determination to confess and forsake sins. A Biblical example is found in the parable of the prodigal son in Luke chapter 15. The son's emotions caused him to feel shame and to regret leaving his father's house, his intellect assessed the fact that his circumstances had altered for the worse as a result of his actions, and his will caused him to determine that he would return to his father and plead to be taken back into the home as a hired servant.

Repentance is not a means of earning salvation; rather, it places a sinner in a position to receive God's forgiveness. Psalm 51 provides a Scriptural example of this point, and is generally ascribed to David, in the context of his sin with Bathsheba. God directed the prophet Nathan to confront David with his sin, and the accusatory words, "Thou art the man" (2 Samuel 12:7), brought David to a place of confession and repentance before God. His desperate cry "I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight," (Psalm 51:3-4) reveal his agonized response to the realization of his sin. His willingness to call upon God in the depths of his despair opened the door to God's forgiveness.

No one can repent and come to God on his own, for Jesus himself said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44). Repentance is something that God gives—it is a gift of His grace.[4] God's longsuffering and goodness leads us to repentance, for he is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

God promises to forgive those who are truly penitent. Isaiah 55:7 says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." When one turns to God with all of his heart, true repentance brings the abundant joy and peace of salvation into the life. Salvation results from turning from sin in genuine, faith-based repentance towards the Lord Jesus Christ.[5]

The prayer of repentance does not need to be long and elaborate, but it must be heartfelt and sincere. One man whose prayer is recorded in Luke 18:13 said simply, "God be merciful to me a sinner." That prayer was accepted, for Jesus said, "This man went down to his house justified" (Luke 18:14).

While repentance does not earn salvation, repentance unto salvation does result in a change in behavior. That is why John the Baptist called people to "bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matthew 3:8).[6] A person who has truly repented of his sins will find salvation and deliverance, resulting in a changed life. This is the new creation spoken of in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." The transformed life is evidence of salvation which was accessed by repentance.[7]

When a sinner repents, there is joy in Heaven that a lost soul has been redeemed (see Luke 15:7, 10).

[1] Psalm 38:18; Proverbs 28:13; Ezekiel 18:21

[2] Some examples of exhortations to repentance are Ezekiel 14:6; 18:31-32; Joel 2:12-13; Matthew 4:17; Acts 17:30.

[3] Ezekiel 33:11; Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 8:22

[4] Acts 5:31; 11:18

[5] Psalm 32:5; 2 Corinthians 7:9-10; 1 John 1:9

[6] See also Luke 3:8-14.

[7] Zacchaeus is an example of one whose behavior was proof that his repentance was genuine. See Luke 19:8-9.

Counsel for Ministers

There is a vast difference between true repentance and the "believe and accept" approach to salvation. The Bible plainly teaches the necessity of renunciation of sin and godly sorrow for it, rather than a mere mental acceptance of God's offer of salvation.

True repentance also serves as a remedy to "sinning Christian" theology. Continuing in even occasional sin is inconsistent with the complete revulsion for sin that was part of repentance, without which salvation could not be received.

Justification

Justification is the act of God's free grace whereby a sinner receives remission of his sins and stands before God as though he had never sinned. It is also a state of being that exists when a person has been judicially pardoned by God and thus absolved from the penalty of sin.

Justification, the opposite of condemnation, occurs when God cancels the guilt and forgives the transgressions of a sinner. We read in Romans 5:1, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." God looks upon the sacrifice Jesus made on Calvary, and accepts that sacrifice as a substitute for the repentant sinner paying his own penalty. For Christ's sake, God forgives, and freely justifies the sinner.[1]

There are many terms used in Scripture that refer to different aspects of the same work of grace.

Saved/Salvation: In Acts 16:30, the Philippian jailer fell down before Paul and Silas and inquired in desperation, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" The word *saved* comes from a Greek word meaning "delivered" or "made whole." The angel of the Lord who appeared to Joseph told him that Mary would bring forth a Child conceived by the Holy Ghost, and declared, "Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

Conversion: Jesus used the word *converted* when He instructed His disciples, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). To be *converted* means "to turn quite around, or reverse." At conversion, sins are blotted out and a person is changed completely by the power of God (see Acts 3:19).

Adoption: The Greek word translated adoption means "the placing of a son" and refers to the declaratory act of God by which the repentant sinner, being justified by faith in Jesus Christ, is received into the family of God. Adoption denotes a legal act by which a person is accorded all the rights and privileges of a birth child, and occurs the moment an individual is born again.[2]

Regeneration/Born again/New birth: The word *regeneration* literally means, "to be born again," and refers to the spiritual change that takes place in a person when he comes into possession of new life in Christ. Jesus told a ruler of the Jews named Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). The phrase *born again* means "born from above." Jesus, using the universally familiar example of physical birth, was illustrating the necessity of spiritual rebirth.

God extends the offer of salvation and eternal life to every individual. We read, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37), and "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). However, each person must choose whether or not he will accept God's offer and receive salvation for his soul.

To be justified one must do more than accept Christ, join a church, or strive to live up to Christian principles.[3] The steps for receiving salvation are laid out in God's Word.

> *Acknowledge the need.* The first step toward receiving forgiveness is realizing the need for it. The Bible says that all have sinned. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). A sinner must recognize the fact that he is a sinner and doomed to Hell unless completely changed by God's mercy. He must comprehend that he is in a perilous condition, in desperate need of God's intervention to save him from eternal damnation.
>
> *Repent and confess*.[4] When a sinner comes to God with genuine sorrow for committed sins and confesses them, asking God to forgive, God will forgive. God's Word promises, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Repentance does not earn God's forgiveness, but rather, it is the condition of the hu-

man heart required by God before forgiveness can be granted.

Forsake sin. The sinner who comes to God for forgiveness must be willing to turn away from past sins and to purpose never to go back to them. As one turns from sin and his own ways, God's pardon is offered in abundance.

Ask. The repentant sinner must invite Jesus Christ into his heart and life and surrender to Him, yielding complete control of his life. Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matthew 7:7-8).

Believe. When a sinner comes to God for mercy and forgiveness, the gap between them must be spanned by faith. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). When a repentant sinner looks to Christ's atoning work at Calvary, faith takes hold and he receives salvation through the redeeming power of Christ.[5]

There are immediate results when an individual is born again. The repentant sinner passes from death into life, having been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God (Colossians 1:12-14). His name is written in Heaven (Luke 10:20), and he stands before God as though he had never sinned. His sins are forgiven and removed as "far as the east is from the west" (Psalm 103:12), and cast "into the depth of the sea" (Micah 7:19).

Inwardly, the saved person experiences immediate freedom from condemnation, which brings an assurance and confidence in his heart (Romans 8:1; 1 John 3:21). The "Spirit itself beareth witness" (Romans 8:16), assuring the new believer that he has been born again. Motives and desires are transformed, and the sense of inner emptiness vanishes. Salvation causes a new believer in Christ to "have peace with God" (Romans 5:1), and instills a deep love for God and for other people.

There are also external evidences of salvation. God's Word states, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). The newborn believer is a new creation whose life style changes in a moment of time. The wrong things that were once loved are hated; the right things that were once hated are loved. When the Blood of Jesus is applied, sinful habits and appetites are broken, never to return as long as the Christian stays true and obedient to God. Sin no longer has dominion, and, being truly born of God, he will sense the need to make restitution.[6]

One of the results of salvation is that a victorious life is made possible. We read in 1 John 3:9-10, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." The nature of God and the nature of sin cannot co-exist; they are so radically different that it is impossible to make a composite of the two. Thus, at justification, a person is empowered to live free from committing sin.

A follower of Christ must continue to walk in obedience to the light of God's Word in order to retain his salvation (see John 8:31; 1 John 3:24). If he does not, that light becomes darkness—and how great is that darkness! The only way for a newborn Christian to retain his freedom from spiritual death is by continuing to abhor and reject all sin. When the justified person walks conscientiously in the light as it is revealed to him, he is a disciple of Christ, a son of God, an heir of God and jointheir with Christ, and a candidate for many rich blessings from the Throne of God.[7]

[1] Other Scriptures that refer to justification and pardon include Isaiah 55:7; Acts 13:39; Romans 3:2126; 1 Corinthians 6:11; and Galatians 3:24.

[2] Scriptures that refer to *adoption* include Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:4-6 and Ephesians 1:5.

[3] "Accepting Christ" is an expression used in many churches to describe how one becomes a Christian, perhaps based on the Biblical expression "received him" in such verses as John 1:12; 4:45; 6:21 and Luke 8:40. While it is necessary to "receive" Him, Christ must also receive the sinner. Since the phrase "accept Christ" does not clearly indicate the need to repent and confess, forsake sin, and commit to following all that Jesus represents and teaches, we tend to avoid use of the phrase in the context of seeking salvation.

[4] Refer to the section on *Repentance Toward God* in this manual for a more complete description of this topic.

[5] See also Ephesians 2:8-9.

[6] Refer to the section on *Restitution* in this manual for a more complete description of this topic.

[7] John 1:12; 8:31; Romans 8:16-17; 1 John 3:1

Counsel for Ministers:

It is possible for Christians to unwittingly lapse into errors or grieve the Spirit in some way through ignorance, thoughtlessness, neglect, or carelessness. A good minister will carefully shepherd these individuals, encouraging them not to conclude that they have backslidden if in fact they have not. When a person has not sinned (by committing an act of willful defiance toward God), even though the remorse for his failure may be great indeed, he need not cast away his confidence. The wise minister will exhort that one to pray for forgiveness of his neglect, carelessness, or doubt, and urge him to learn through his experiences and move forward.

Entire Sanctification, or Holiness

Entire sanctification is a second, instantaneous, and definite work of God's grace, which is subsequent to salvation. It is accomplished in the believer through the shed Blood of Jesus Christ. Sanctification is also a state of being that exists when a person has experienced the eradication of the sin nature.

The word *sanctify*, along with the words translated *saint*, *holy*, and *hallowed*, are derived from the Greek word *hagios*, which means "holy." For this reason, the experience of sanctification is also sometimes referred to as "holiness." The verb *sanctify* has three basic meanings: "to make holy or purify," "to consecrate or to separate from ungodliness and dedicate to God," and finally, "to hallow." A study of these words reveals that sanctification is the purification of the heart of a person—a dedication to God and an eradication of the sin nature. A holy and sanctified person, then, is one who first has been consecrated and set apart to serve God, and subsequently cleansed from his old sin nature. Sanctification also is shown in passages that refer to cleansing, perfection, perfect love, or purity of heart.[1]

Sanctification, or holiness, is clearly commanded by Scripture. In the Old Testament, God commanded Abraham, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Genesis 17:1). The word translated *perfect* in this verse carries with it the meanings "complete," "full," "without spot," "sound," "undefiled," and "upright." (Thus, the phrases "entire sanctification" or "sanctified wholly" are wonderful examples of the original Hebrew meaning being transmitted accurately into modern English.) God's command was not issued when Abraham was first called to believe and follow the Lord into the land of Canaan; this was about twenty-three or twenty-four years later. The time had come when God wanted Abraham to draw yet nearer to Him, so He said, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect."

God pointed His chosen people, the nation of Israel, to sanctification, instructing them, "Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy; for I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 20:7). That command is reiterated in the New Testament in 1 Peter 1:16, "Be ye holy; for I am holy."

In the New Testament, Paul expressed his desire to believers of the Early Church that the "God of peace sanctify you wholly" (1 Thessalonians 5:23). As with the Old Testament word translated *perfect*, the word translated *wholly* is very expressive: it means "complete to the end," "through and through," "all in all," or "in every part." There is no implication that God would sanctify them gradually or partially, so the experience of sanctification is often referred to as "entire sanctification." The experience of sanctification is complete; it is not obtained progressively. In many New Testament references to sanctification and holiness, the definite nature of sanctification is evidenced in the original Greek text by the aorist tense of the verb, which indicates a specific and completed act rather than an ongoing one.[2] Though spiritual growth continues throughout a Christian's life, the cleansing work of sanctification is not a gradual process; it is accomplished in an instant.

The necessity for a second work of grace which cleanses and purifies is made evident by the twofold nature of sin: acts of sin (committed sins or transgressions), and the inward principle of sin (inherited depravity, or the carnal or Adamic nature).[3] In Scripture, outward sins or transgressions are usually indicated by the plural word *sins*. Inward depravity is usually referred to by the singular form, *sin.* Just as there are two aspects of sin, there are two separate applications of the Blood of Christ as remedies: justification, which pardons the transgressions of the penitent sinner; and sanctification, which cleanses his heart of the inward sin principle. Forgiveness is offered for actual committed sins, while cleansing is offered for the Adamic nature. [4]

Entire sanctification destroys the "body of sin" (Romans 6:6)—which is also referred to as the carnal mind, the sin nature, or the old man—taking out the inclination or bent to sinning. It provides cleansing from the pollution of inbred original sin, and makes one holy within. The lost moral image of God, in which man was originally created is restored "after the image of him that created him" (Colossians 3:10), and unity of purpose is established with God, for we read, "both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one"

(Hebrews 2:11). Sanctification "casteth out fear" [fear being the opposite of bold confidence in God] (1 John 4:18) and causes believers to be "made perfect in one" (John 17:23) with other believers as well as with God.

While the carnal nature is eradicated at sanctification, the experience does not result in the absolute perfection of the believer in the same sense that God is absolutely perfect. Neither does sanctification bring about Adamic perfection—regenerated and sanctified individuals do not return to the state of created innocence which Adam had prior to the Fall. And sanctification does not remove the limitations and frailties that accompany humanity which were brought about by the Fall; people are not mentally, physically, or emotionally perfect as a result of sanctification, but morally perfect. Sanctification provides a perfect heart—a state of living where a person loves the Lord with all of his heart, soul, mind, and strength; where every deed is motivated by devotion to God. The sanctified heart seeks after God and His will. Sanctified individuals cultivate purity in spirit, soul, and body, and they turn away from anything that would contaminate any part of their beings.

Sanctification does not eliminate the possibility of being tempted. Although Adam was created in a pure, moral state, he still was subject to temptation. Adam had the power to overrule what he knew was right; he did so and chose to do evil. The sanctified person can still choose to overrule what he knows is right, and fall back into sin.

Many Old Testament incidents, types, and personal experiences portray the doctrine of entire sanctification.[5] In the Tabernacle worship, the trespass offering looked ahead to the provision made by Christ's death for the forgiveness of outward sins (see Leviticus 6:17). In contrast, the sin offering was a type of the shedding of His Blood for the sanctification of the justified soul (see Leviticus 9:3,15 and Hebrews 13:11-13). No mention was made of actual wrongdoings when the sin offering was presented. These two separate and distinct offerings typify the twofold provision made when the Son of God died as an atonement for both sinful acts and the state of sin.

The experience of sanctification was taught to the Early Church. Jesus prayed for His disciples that they might be sanctified (see John 17:16-23). Before the Day of Pentecost, the 120 were in one accord, indicating that they had been sanctified (see Acts 2:1). Paul was concerned that the believers in Thessalonica be sanctified, stating, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24).

Ephesians 5:25-27 declares that Jesus died, "that he might sanctify and cleanse it [the Church] with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." The purpose of sanctification is to make the Church what it ought to be in the sight of God. Those who know their sins have been forgiven can be sanctified and a part of the "glorious church" made up of individuals who are "holy and without blemish."

[1] Some examples are Leviticus 20:7-8; Matthew 5:48; Luke 1:74-75; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 1 John 3:3.

[2] An example is found in Acts 15:9, where Peter stated to the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem that God "put no difference between us [the Jewish followers of Christ] and them [the Gentile converts], purifying their hearts by faith." The original Greek word translated *purifying* shows that this cleansing was a definite act, completed at a time previous to the outpouring of the Spirit at the house of Cornelius. Other verses showing sanctification as a definite, instantaneous act include Romans 12:1; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Galatians 5:24; Ephesians 4:22, 24 and Colossians 3:5.

[3] The inward nature or principle of sin has been inherited since the Fall of Man in the Garden of Eden, and

is often referred to as the Adamic nature. See the section of this manual on *The Nature of Sin* for a more complete summary of this subject.

[4] The Apostle John addresses the two-fold sin problem and presents the two-fold remedy in 1 John 1:7-9 where he says, "If we confess our sins, *[committed sins]* he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins *[salvation],* and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness *[sanctification]*."

[5] One example illustrating that David had knowledge of the two-fold nature of sin and God's two-fold plan for deliverance is found in Psalm 51:1-7. While in verse 1 David pleads for mercy and admits his transgressions [committed sins], he also asks God to "wash me throughly [or completely] . . . and cleanse me" (verse 2) which speaks to the nature of sin. In verses 3 and 4 he again refers to his transgressions and the evil he has done in the sight of God [committed sins], and in verse 7 pleads with God to "purge" him, referring to his inward nature.

Counsel for Ministers:

Some Pentecostal organizations object to the doctrine of entire sanctification, saying that two works of grace are not necessary for God entirely to cleanse and pardon—that God is fully capable of destroying all sin in one application. This teaching has its roots in a 1910 sermon entitled "The Finished Work of Calvary," preached by William Howard Durham at a mid-western Pentecostal convention. His finished work teaching seeks to nullify the doctrinal truth that sanctification is a crisis experience subsequent to and distinct from conversion. This was a change of position from those who initially received the Pentecostal experience at the Azusa Street revival in 1906 through 1909; the fact that three definite spiritual experiences (justification, entire sanctification, and the Baptism of the Holy Ghost) were taught there is well documented in the papers published at the Azusa mission. (See our website at apostlicfaith.org to view copies of those early papers.)

It is vitally important that we understand the distinction between *humanity* and *carnality.* In reference to the topic of sanctification, the term *humanity* deals with the physical, mental and emotional limitations that are the result of the Fall. Sanctification does not bring about a perfection of our faculties but of our moral nature; as long as we are in this world our judgment, choices, and behaviors can be impaired by our humanity. The term *carnality*, on the other hand, deals with the nature of sin present in every unsanctified individual which instinctively inclines them toward evil. It may be difficult at times to distinguish between offenses that are the result of humanity and those which spring from carnality, but we must be aware that there is a vast difference in the sight of God.

Similarly, there is a difference between *purity* and *maturity*. *Purity* answers to carnality, while *maturity* answers to humanity. While the Bible clearly teaches a definite and instantaneous experience of sanctification which results in inward purity, the sanctified individual should continue to grow and mature as a Christian throughout his life.

The Baptism of the Holy Ghost

The baptism of the Holy Ghost is the experience of the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, coming into a sanctified person's life to endue that one with power for God's service.[1] The word *baptize* means "to be immersed; to be totally covered" and can be understood by looking at the physical act of water baptism. When an individual is baptized in water after he has been saved, he goes down into the water and the water completely covers him. He is immersed. When one receives the baptism of the Holy Ghost, he is totally immersed and covered and filled with the Holy Ghost.

Jesus himself used the word *baptism* in connection with the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. He explained to His disciples that just as John had baptized with water, they would be baptized with the Holy Ghost.[2] The word *baptize* gave His followers an idea of what they were to expect—that they would be immersed in the Holy Ghost.

In order to be filled with the Holy Ghost, a person first must be justified by faith. Scripture is clear that the Holy Spirit is not given to the unconverted. When the multitude asked the disciples following Pentecost, "Men and brethren, what shall we do? Peter's response was, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:37-38).[3] A second prerequisite for receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost is the experience of sanctification, which occurs when the saved person goes deeper in consecration, setting himself apart unto God, and God purges his heart from the inherited nature of sin. The clean, sanctified individual is then prepared to receive the Holy Spirit. (See Jesus' prayer for His followers in John 17 in conjunction with Acts 2:1.)

The baptism of the Holy Spirit was typified in the Old Testament. For example, the three areas of the Tabernacle were a picture of the three experiences. The brazen altar in the outer court, where the trespass offering was killed, was a type of justification. The blood of the sin offering was taken into the Holy Place and perfect communion with God was established—a type of sanctification.[4] The Shekinah (Glory) dwelt in the Holy of Holies, and likewise the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in sanctified believers when they receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Another portrayal of the baptism of the Holy Ghost is seen at the dedication of Solomon's Temple, where the power of the Holy Spirit fell so mightily that the priests could not minister because of the glory of the Lord.[5]

The outpouring of the Holy Ghost was foretold by the Old Testament prophet Joel. Some eight hundred years before Christ, he wrote of the baptism of the Holy Spirit: "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month….And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit" (Joel 2:23,28-29). Joel may not have fully understood the prophecy that he gave, but his words were spoken by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and later were quoted by Peter in reference to the Pentecost outpouring (Acts 2:16).

Before Jesus' crucifixion, He promised the gift of the Holy Spirit, telling His disciples, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:16). He went on to say, "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

Just before Jesus ascended to Heaven, He instructed His disciples to "wait for the promise of the Father," promising them that they would be "baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:4-5). Following Christ's ascension, a group of 120 people gathered in an upper room in the city of Jerusalem in

obedience to Jesus' command. The 120 were saved individuals who had been with Christ when He went up into the clouds, and were obviously committed to following His instructions since they continued in prayer and supplication. Jesus had prayed for them to be sanctified and to experience the unity He shared with the Father, "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (John 17:21). Before the Spirit fell upon them, we find that they were all in the Upper Room "with one accord, in one place" (Acts 2:1), which is evidence that Jesus' prayer for them had been answered and they had been sanctified.

Fifty days after Jesus' crucifixion and ten days after His ascension, the power of God descended upon those sanctified believers in the Upper Room, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost. Acts 2:1-4 records the event, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

God made His presence known to this group of believers in an outstanding way in this initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The coming of the Spirit was accompanied by two manifestations: the sound of a rushing mighty wind, and the appearance of cloven tongues like as of fire. John the Baptist had foretold One who would baptize "with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matthew 3:11), and the two physical evidences were a graphic portrayal of the coming of the Spirit.

Those who had been filled began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance. People from faraway countries who were in the city for the Day of Pentecost recognized their own native tongues, and were amazed to hear the believers speaking in these languages they had never learned. Seeing their astonishment, Peter stood and declared that this was what had been prophesied by the prophet Joel—the Holy Ghost had descended upon the disciples in Jerusalem. Peter's sermon that day resulted in the salvation of three thousand souls.[6]

When the disciples received the infilling of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, they immediately began to teach that it was the gift of power which every true believer should seek and receive, preaching that "the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39).[7] In the years following the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost continued to be poured out upon believers. Scripture records some of those instances. For example, about eight years after the initial outpouring in the Upper Room, the Spirit was poured out upon Gentiles in the household of Cornelius. Those who accompanied the Apostle Peter to Cornelius' home immediately recognized that the believers gathered there had received the Holy Ghost, "for they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God" (Acts 10:46). In Acts 19:6, we read of the Holy Ghost falling on a group of believers at Ephesus, and when that occurred, "they spake with tongues, and prophesied." All received the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in other tongues. This outpouring occurred about nineteen years after the initial outpouring.

Speaking in a previously unlearned language is still the initial evidence of the empowering of the Holy Spirit today. As at Pentecost and in other Scriptural accounts, the speaking in other tongues which accompanies the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not gibberish or unintelligible mutterings, but a distinguishable language. It is not a special unknown prayer language.

The outpourings that empowered Jesus' followers in New Testament times was the Early Rain prophesied by Joel. The prophet also foretold that there would be a Latter Rain, when God would again pour the Holy Spirit upon all nationalities.[8] This was to take place in the time of the end, shortly before the coming of the Lord. In periods prior to the twentieth century, God poured out His Spirit on individuals here and there. However, those were only "sprinklings" of the Latter Rain prophesied in Scripture. In April of 1906, the Latter Rain began to fall in Los Angeles, California, and miraculously spread around the world in a very short time. The same evidence of speaking in tongues accompanied the experience as at the descent of the Early Rain.

[1] Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8. Note that the terms *Holy Ghost* and *Holy Spirit* are interchangeable in Scripture; they are both translated from the same Greek word in the original text. Refer to the section on *God the Holy Ghost* for a more complete description of the nature and work of the Holy Spirit.

[2] See Acts 1:5.

[3] See also 1 Corinthians 2:14.

[4] See Hebrews 13:11-12.

[5] Compare 2 Chronicles 5:11-14 with Acts 2:14, 43. Parallels are seen in these great events. There were 120 priests in the Temple and 120 disciples in the Upper Room. Both of these groups of individuals exhibited the fruits of a sanctified life. The glory of the Lord filled both locations. The priests did not wait by course, as they were being led by God, and the Spirit-empowered disciples likewise went out to follow a greater Leadership after the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. Both groups were filled with praises to God.

[6] Peter's sermon is found in Acts 2:14-41.

[7] See Acts 19:2 for another example of an admonition to believers to receive the Holy Ghost.

[8] Joel 2:21-32; Acts 2:16-21, 38-39

Counsel for Ministers:

As time goes by, words of a language sometimes assume new meanings or connotations. In the past, the word "experimental" was sometimes used when referring to salvation, sanctification, or the baptism of the Holy Ghost, to indicate that these were definite experiences with God. However, in current usage the word "experimental" indicates an attempt to find out whether or not an action will be effective, with an implication of tentativeness. Thus, the word "experiential" currently would more accurately portray the definite nature of the three foundational experiences.

Some religious organizations insist that if any of the physical manifestations of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost are to be considered necessary today, all of them must be considered necessary—by that argument seeking to prove that it is not necessary for one who receives the baptism to speak in an unknown tongue. They point out that one of the signs given on the Day of Pentecost was the sound from Heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind. While that sound may not be as apparent to the natural ear now, we have often sensed, by our spiritual natures, that same movement of the Spirit of God coming into the midst of a tarrying group to fill and empower someone for service. In the original outpouring, there appeared "cloven tongues like as of fire" which sat upon each of them. The visible flames were not mentioned in subsequent New Testament outpourings, but the work of the Holy Spirit and the evidences in the life of the recipient are the same now as they were back then.

The Church

The word *church* as used in the New Testament is a translation of the compound Greek word *ecclesia*, taken from *ek* (meaning "out") and *kaleo* ("to call or summon") and simply meaning "called out ones." It suggests the assembly of those who have been summoned out from their residence or places of occupation, and is especially used to indicate a religious congregation or assembly. *Ecclesia* occurs 118 times in the New Testament, being translated as *church* 115 times, and as *assembly* three times.[1]

The true Church of Jesus Christ, sometimes called the "Invisible Church,"[2] is made up of individuals whose names have been "written in the Lamb's book of Life" (Revelation 21:27), and who live pure, exemplary lives in accordance with God's Word. The Church is built by Jesus Christ himself (Matthew 16:17-18) and is His visible representation on earth. Its importance is seen in the infinite love Jesus had for it, in that "he hath purchased [it] with his own blood" (Acts 20:28), and "gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25).

The Invisible Church is perfect in purity, "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; . . . holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27). One of its most important identifying marks is unity—the members of this Church are one body of believers, led by one Spirit, have one calling, and serve one Lord.[3] Paul said that the Church, which he referred to as "the household of God," was built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (Ephesians 2:19-21).

The Church is alluded to in Scripture as the Body of Christ, of which He is its Head.[4] Its members will make up the Bride of Christ,[5] and will be "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Revelation 19:8). Other New Testament Scriptures refer to the Church as a royal priesthood,[6] a spiritual building or house,[7] and the Church of the Firstborn.[8] God's people are identified as the habitation of God,[9] the light of the world,[10] the salt of the earth,[11] the flock of God, [12] the children and heirs of God,[13] and branches of the True Vine.[14]

Inherent throughout Scripture is the concept that God's people should participate in local gatherings of believers. These local bodies are sometimes referred to as the "visible" church, to differentiate them from the Invisible Church of all the ages. The visible church consists of ecclesiastical communities whose members are known and whose assemblies are public, organized for the purpose of proclaiming and promoting the Gospel of the kingdom of God.

Gatherings or convocations of God's people were emphasized in Old Testament times. The Children of Israel were required to attend three annual feasts, as well as other assemblies. These were times when all normal daily work was to be subjugated to spiritual concerns.[15] Attendance was required.[16] These were times of cleansing, fasting, humility, sacrifice and offerings, worship, and earnest prayer.[17]

Many examples of religious assemblies are found in the Old Testament writings. Moses pitched the Tabernacle of the congregation outside of the camp, and instructed everyone who sought the Lord to go there to meet Him.[18] Samuel required all of Israel to gather at Mizpah in a solemn assembly, where he prayed for them and they fasted and confessed their sins.[19] Hezekiah ordered the cleansing of the sanctuary, and decreed that all the people were to gather to make offerings to God and worship Him.[20] Josiah called a solemn assembly, and led the people in entering into a covenant with the Lord to walk in all His ways.[21] Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Joel also called for assemblies of the people, leading them in fasting, seeking the Lord, and dedication of themselves to Him.[22]

In the New Testament, Jesus taught the importance of believers meeting together, telling His disciples that "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20). Jesus called the Apostles to be the initial leaders of His church, instructing and preparing them for the larger ministry they and the other believers would have after the empowering of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. Lo-

cal gatherings of believers began immediately after the crucifixion. These churches had recognized forms of worship and service,[23] appointed leaders and roles,[24] and had participation requirements and the authority to exercise discipline.[25] Examples of these principles exist through the Acts of the Apostles, as well as the Epistles.[26]

The visible church's mission is to proclaim the Gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ.[27] It is God's agent to equip His people to do His work and build up the body of Christ.[28] It is instructed to preach the pure Word of God, and is given authority to administer the ordinances of water baptism, the Lord's Supper, and washing of the disciples feet.[29]

The visible church is enjoined to exercise discipline, exemplify love, exercise spiritual gifts, glorify God in all things, edify the flock, teach what Jesus commanded, be an enlightening and restraining influence in the world, minister to those in need, promote good and oppose evil, and to evangelize the world.[30] It is to provide a place of fellowship where Christians can be devoted to one another and honor one another, instruct one another, be kind and compassionate to one another, encourage one another, and love one another.[31]

The existence of the true Church does not depend on manmade forms or rituals, on edifices or implements of worship, on the favor of governments or ruling bodies, or on any actions or dispensations from the hand of man. It has often existed and even thrived when all these things were taken from it; though challenged, ridiculed, banned, and defied, it continues to exist, dependent upon nothing but the presence of God and His Spirit.

The future of the Church is glorious, for it will be caught away in the Rapture, when the Lord himself "shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and 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 4:16-17). The Church will be presented without spot before God the Father's throne and will enjoy abundant privileges throughout eternity.[32]

[1] Figures from *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.*

[2] The "Invisible Church" is so titled because it is comprised of believers from the antediluvians until now, including those who are already in Heaven. The complete membership in the Invisible Church is noted only by Him who searches the heart, since "the Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Timothy 2:19).

[3] Ephesians 4:4-6

[4] Colossians 1:18

[5] 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 19:7-9

[6] 1 Peter 2:9-10

[7] 1 Corinthians 3:9; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:4-7

[8] Hebrews 12:23

[9] Ephesians 2:22

[10] 1 Thessalonians 5:5

[11] Matthew 5:13

[12] Luke 12:32; John 10:7-16

[13] Romans 8:16-17; 1 John 3:10

[14] John 15:1-10

[15] See the instruction of Leviticus 23:34-36, Numbers 29:35, and Deuteronomy 16:8.

[16] This is evident in a number of Old Testament gatherings, but is definitely expressed in Joel 2:16.

[17] 2 Chronicles 29:5; Joel 2:15; Numbers 10:10; 15:3; Nehemiah 9:1-3

[18] Exodus 33:7

[19] 1 Samuel 7:5-6

[20] 2 Chronicles 29:3-5, 27-29

[21] 2 Chronicles 34:29-32

[22] Ezra 6:16-18; 8:21-23; Nehemiah 8:2-6; Joel 1:13-15; 2:15-17

[23] Chapters 12-14 of 1 Corinthians

[24] Philippians 1:1; Acts 20:17; 1 Timothy 4:14

[25] 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

[26] For example, see Romans 16:1,5; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; Galatians 1:1-2; Philippians 1:1, and many more.

[27] Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8; 2:41-47

[28] Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Corinthians 3:10; Jude 1:20

[29] Matthew 25:34-36; 28:19; John 13:14-15; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 4:14

[30] John 13:34-35; Ephesians 3:21; 4:11-12; Hebrews 13:17

[31] Romans 12:10; 15:14; Ephesians 4:32; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; 1 John 3:11

[32] 1 Corinthians 6:2; 2 Timothy 2:11-13; Revelation 1:6; 3:21; 20:4, 6

Divine Healing

As the omnipotent Creator, God has made provision for every need of human beings, including healing of the physical body. Disease, pain, and death entered the world when Adam and Eve sinned. However, in His Atonement on Calvary, Jesus provided for our healing as well as paying the penalty for our sins.

The prophet Isaiah foretold, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isaiah 53:4). The word translated *griefs* is used in reference to physical sickness and disease in 2 Chronicles 16:12; 21:15,18-19, and Isaiah 38:9. *Sorrows* is used in Job 33:19 to denote physical pain. So this verse could be translated, "Surely he hath borne our sicknesses and carried our pain."

Isaiah continues, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). The verb *healed*, meaning "to mend or cure," has a connotation of being made whole. While the prophet saw Christ's future suffering in such clarity that he spoke of it in the past tense, he indicated that with His stripes we "*are* healed," the verb tense reflecting an ongoing or continuing action.

In the New Testament, Peter quoted from Isaiah's prophecy. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree,… by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:24). In stating that Jesus' stripes brought *healing*, Peter used the Greek word *iaomai*. In the vast majority of cases where this word is used in the New Testament, it indicates physical healing.[1]

In Matthew 8:16-17, Matthew also quoted from Isaiah's prophecy: "They brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."[2] Matthew simply recorded that Jesus fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy by physically healing the sick, giving proof that both Isaiah and Peter were talking about physical healing. Matthew used two specific words to make clear this truth: *infirmities* (from the Greek word *astheneias*, meaning the "consequences of sickness") and *diseases* (from the Greek word *nosous*, meaning "sicknesses").

The Old Testament contains many references to God's power and willingness to heal. God gave the first recorded promise of divine healing soon after He brought the Israelites out of Egypt, telling them, "I am the Lord that healeth thee" (Exodus 15:26), and He subsequently undertook for them many times.[3] When the Children of Israel sinned and God sent poisonous snakes among them as punishment, Moses was commanded to make a bronze serpent and lift it up on a pole so that those who had been bitten could look upon it and be healed (see Numbers 21:5-9).

Many other miracles of healing and even raising of the dead are recorded in the Old Testament. For example, a dead child was restored to life through the prayer of Elijah (1 Kings 17:22). Naaman the leper received healing when he obeyed Elisha's command to wash seven times in the Jordan River (2 Kings 5:14). God healed King Hezekiah in response to his prayer, and added fifteen years to his life (2 Kings 20:6).

In Psalm 103, the Psalmist David gives praise for the fact that God "healeth all thy diseases" (Psalm 103:3). In other psalms, too, both physical and spiritual healing are referenced as coming from God.

In the New Testament era, much of Jesus' ministry on earth involved healing those who were physically afflicted; miracles of healing were an important part of the works God sent Jesus to do.[4] Jesus' miracles authenticated His teaching and preaching, showing that He truly was from God.[5]

After John the Baptist was imprisoned, he began to experience doubt as to whether Jesus really was the Promised One. Jesus responded by calling attention to the fact that "the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised . . . " (Luke 7:22). John knew that these miracles were the very acts that the prophets had said the Messiah would do.

As word of Jesus' ministry spread, multitudes came to hear Him and be healed. He never turned any away, but "healed them all" (Matthew 12:15). He cleansed the lepers, restored sight to the blind, gave hearing to the deaf, and speech to the mute. He cast out devils, cured fevers, and even raised the dead. No sickness or disease was beyond His ability to cure.[6]

Divine healing continued to be an integral part of the Gospel through the ministry of the Early Church. Jesus sent out the Twelve, and later seventy of His disciples, to preach and to heal the sick. Just before His ascension, He promised, "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; . . . they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:17-18). The disciples were to take God's message into all the world, but it had to be in His name—according to God's character and will. Requests made in His name today, including those for healing, must align with His desires and eternal purpose for each individual.

We live in a world where evil impacts the health and welfare of all. The Fall brought upon mankind the realities of sickness, aging, accidents, and other physical calamities. Intemperate living and sinful lifestyles have led to human illness in many forms: addictions, diseases, some types of mental and emotional disturbances, stress-related conditions, etc. However, even those who serve God are not immune to disease and affliction. Although the Apostle Paul was a man of faith and spiritual power, he endured affliction. Paul prayed three times for the removal of his "thorn in the flesh." God refused, but He let Paul know that the trial would be accompanied by His enduring grace. (See 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.)

Sickness can be the result of judgment or of the activity of Satan.[7] However, there are numerous other reasons given in Scripture for why affliction occurs.[8]

A study of Jesus' healing ministry reveals some requirements for receiving healing. In most cases, a desire to be healed is expressed, either by the individual himself or by the one bringing that person to the Lord. In Matthew 20:30-34, we read that two blind men sitting by the wayside heard that Jesus was passing by and cried out to Him for mercy. Jesus stopped and asked them, "What will ye that I shall do unto you?" When they responded that they wanted their eyes to be opened, He "had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him."[9]

A desire for God's divine intervention must be accompanied by a belief that God is able to heal. When Jesus was approached by a Roman centurion on behalf of his servant who was "grievously tormented," He agreed to come and heal the servant. However, the centurion indicated that if Jesus would just say the word, he knew his servant would be healed. Jesus commended the centurion's faith, saying, "As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." The servant was healed "in the selfsame hour." (See Matthew 8:5-13.)

The Bible makes it clear that faith in God must also be accompanied by a willingness to obey Him.[10] Many times Jesus required people to take an action that would demonstrate their obedience to Him before healing them. For example, a blind man was told to wash in the pool of Siloam (John 9:7), and the ten lepers were told to go and show themselves to the priests (Luke 17:14).

In James 5:13-14, God's Word gives instructions for those who are afflicted. We read, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. . . Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." It is instructive that the Bible puts the burden on the sick person to approach the ministry and request prayer. The afflicted individual takes the first step by indicating a desire to follow God's Word in this matter.

The process outlined in these verses is clear. As ministers, we are instructed to anoint the sick individual with oil.[11] The oil has been consecrated by prayer, and the anointing is done in the name of the Lord, in obedience to His Word. We take a bit of oil on a finger and put it on the sick individual's forehead. We place a hand on the head of the one who has come for prayer, and offer a simple, audible prayer asking God to undertake. As

we look Heaven's way, we submit to God's will, in peaceful assurance that whatever He does will be for the sick person's ultimate good.[12]

There may be times when healing does not come because of a spiritual hindrance. Scripture indicates that a lack of faith (James 1:6-7), the need for prayer and fasting (Mark 9:28-29), sin in the life (Jeremiah 5:25), or praying with a wrong motive (James 4:3) can stand in the way of an answer to prayer. Yet, a lack of instant healing is not necessarily an indication that any of these conditions exist. It may be that instantaneous healing is not the will of God in a particular case.

While we do not know how God will answer in each situation, Scripture indicates that extraordinary cures will occur. God will be glorified by the healing of bodies. James concludes his instructions by saying, "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (James 5:15). If a sick person's heart is reaching God's way and he confesses his sins, God promises to forgive.

God can and often does heal miraculously, without any human intervention. Or doctors and medical treatment may assist the natural healing power invested in the human body by the Creator. No matter what God ordains in each situation, it is the privilege of afflicted believers to look to Him in faith as their Healer.

[1] The only two exceptions, where the word could possibly be referencing spiritual healing, are Matthew 13:15 and John 12:40, both of which are quoting from Isaiah 6:9-10.

[2] Jesus healed people before His crucifixion, but that does not negate the fact that healing was provided through the Atonement. Scripture also records that Jesus also forgave sins before His death on the cross. (See Matthew 9:2,6-7; Luke 7:48-50.) Healings that took place prior to Christ's death foreshadowed the price He would pay at Calvary, just as healings that take place in our day look back in faith to that event.

[3] Deuteronomy 8:4; 2 Chronicles 30:20; Psalm 107:20.

[4] See John 9:3-4.

[5] An example is found in Mark 2:1-12, when four friends brought a palsied man to the Lord. The first words Jesus spoke were, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee" (verse 5). Jesus knew that the scribes who heard His words questioned His authority to forgive sins, so He proved his authority by subsequently healing the sick man.

[6] See Matthew 4:23.

[7] Examples include Genesis 19:11; Exodus 9:8-11; 2 Kings 5:26-27; Luke 13:16; Acts 13:10-11; and 1 Corinthians 11:28-30.

[8] There are many reasons why suffering may come to a Christian. Job was declared "perfect and upright" in the sight of God, yet God allowed Satan to afflict him tremendously for His own purposes. Some of the reasons given in Scripture include: the normal decline of physical health that occurs in old age (Genesis 48:10), or the result of rigorous duties (see Philippians 2:25-30). At times, affliction may be permitted in order to display God's power (John 9:3), or for a person's personal spiritual growth or refinement (Psalm 119:71). It may come to prove God's power to deliver (Psalm 34:19), to bring us back from wandering (Psalm 119:67), to allow us to experience God's comfort (Psalm 119:75-76), to teach us how to comfort others who are afflicted (2 Corinthians 1:4), for our spiritual refinement (Isaiah 48:10), or for our eternal gain (2 Corinthians 4:17).

[9] Other examples of individuals who expressed a desire for healing can be found in Mark 10:46-52 and John 5:5-9.

[10] An Old Testament example is found in Deuteronomy 7:12 and 15.

[11] The oil itself carries no supernatural or curative powers, but is used in anointing to symbolize God's Spirit. James 5:13-14 is a New Testament example where faith is accompanied by a willingness to obey (see footnote 10).

[12] For further information regarding our ministering to the sick, see the section of this manual titled *Ministering to the Sick and Shut In.*

Counsel for Ministers:

Belief in the Bible doctrine of divine healing does not oppose nor compete with professional medical care. The acceptance or refusal of medical assistance is a personal choice, not a Bible doctrine.

As ministers, it is not our role is to offer advice regarding the utilization or refusal of professional medical care. The church may be held legally responsible if the minister either preaches or counsels that one should not have medical treatment, especially when a minor is involved.

It is true that the Bible indicts King Asa because, when he was afflicted, "he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians" (2 Chronicles 16:12). However, King Asa had previously sought help from Syria in an act of unbelief and disobedience (see 2 Chronicles 16:7). He was condemned because he refused to seek the Lord, not because he solicited the assistance of physicians.

We are to support and pray for one who seeks medical care just as we support and pray for one who decides *not* to obtain medical care. Choosing professional medical assistance cannot be automatically viewed as an indicator that one is abandoning God. As ministers, we pray for the sick with anticipation that God will heal, and if they remain sick, that God will encourage their faith as they continue to rely upon Him.

We also gain nothing by speaking in a disparaging manner of the medical profession and the care they do their best to provide.

We must be careful when preaching the Bible accounts of the physically and mentally impaired that we in no way disrespect members of our audience who have physical or mental handicaps. If we lack sensitivity, we risk causing great offense by referring in a negative manner to individuals with physical or mental disabilities.

God's Plan for the Future

Signs of the End Times

The imminence of Christ's return to rapture His Church is a clear doctrine of Scripture. A careful consideration of Old Testament prophecies indicates that the culmination of God's dealings with the people of this earth will soon occur. From the earliest days of the New Testament Church, the Apostles and first-generation followers of Christ nurtured an earnest expectation and fervent hope that Christ might return momentarily.[1]

When Jesus' disciples asked Him "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24:3), He responded with a comprehensive list. He said there would be:

False christs. In the last several years, news sources have reported of many who have claimed to be the Messiah. These false prophets are a prelude to the ultimate false Christ, the Antichrist.

Wars and rumors of wars. The sheer annihilative potential of current weaponry, and the potential of conflict on a global scale, has made this the most dangerous time in history. Reports of military engagements and rumors of wars are circulated instantly via the internet and 24-hour news sources.

Famines. Drought has come to lands in our day that have never before suffered from a lack of rain, causing a drastically reduced food supply. In some countries, life-sustaining crops have been replaced with plants that supply the world's illegal drugs. An increasing world population and diminishing natural resources also contribute to the number of people suffering from hunger.

Pestilences. New strains of viruses are being discovered that baffle scientists. In the past few decades, numerous "new" infectious diseases have emerged, as well as antibiotic-resistant strains of "old" diseases.

Earthquakes. Serious earthquakes have increased in number and have recently shaken parts of the world which have never before recorded an earthquake. Though many earthquakes are currently recorded each day, most are not felt because they hit remote areas or have very small magnitudes.

Persecution and killing of followers of Jesus. Christians are under attack throughout the world today. In countries such as China, India, some of the nations of Africa, North Korea, and many Muslim nations, Christians suffer and often die for their faith.

False prophets deceiving many. The practice of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam has been steadily increasing. The United States is also seeing a significant upsurge of witchcraft and Satan worship.

Widespread iniquity. Lawlessness and crime is rampant in many nations of the world. The media's blatant portrayal of homosexuality and immorality, and widespread acceptance of "alternative lifestyles," has resulted in increasingly wicked societies. Abortion is a widely accepted option for terminating unwanted pregnancies.

Declining love for truth. Many churches which once preached the fundamentals of Christianity—the new birth and a life without sin—have changed their doctrines, "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (2 Timothy 3:5).

The Gospel preached worldwide. The Bible has been translated into many languages. Technology allows us to reach around the world right from our own homes and churches.

In addition to the signs given by Jesus, numerous other prophecies in the Word of God deal with end time events. For example, Paul wrote that perilous times would come in the last days, and that evil men would become worse and worse.[2] We live in a day of inexplicable outbreaks of violence—random shoot-

ings, murders, and mass killings. Riots and ethnic bloodshed are signs of increasing intercommunity struggles.

Daniel foretold that "many shall run to and fro" in the time of the end (Daniel 12:4). Currently, travelers around the world log air miles in the billions annually. Despite sharply higher oil prices and ongoing concerns about terrorism, air travel continues to increase. In the same verse, Daniel also prophesied that knowledge would be increased in the last days. Today, the internet allows instant access to virtually unlimited information.

Perhaps the greatest sign of the end of the Church Age is found in recent happenings concerning the nation of Israel. Jesus said, "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it [the coming of Christ] is near, even at the doors" (Matthew 24:32-33). Scripture teaches that this fig tree represents the Jewish nation.[3] Just as Jesus' hearers could discern the season by observing the fig tree's stage of development, believers today can discern the times by observing signs in the nation of Israel.

God said that because of their disobedience, the Jewish people would be scattered among all nations and that Jerusalem would be controlled by the Gentiles "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). During their thirty or more centuries of existence, the Jews have been continually on the verge of annihilation, yet they have been miraculously preserved. In 1948, Israel was declared a nation for the first time since the Babylonian Captivity, which began in 597 B.C. Today Jewish emigrants are moving to Israel from every country in the world.[4]

When the Jews were scattered after the crucifixion of Jesus, the region became desolate and unproductive. For more than 1800 years, rainfall in the area decreased dramatically, and even the wandering Bedouins could scarcely maintain an existence. The Prophet Joel indicated that the rains would return when the Day of the Lord was at hand.[5] At the turn of the twentieth century, the severe drought ended, and vegetation began to flourish.

The prophet Zephaniah foretold that the nation of Israel would have a pure language during the end times.[6] Hebrew—a language which had been considered dead—became an official language in British-ruled Palestine in 1921 (along with English and Arabic), and then in 1948 became an official language of the newly declared State of Israel.

Daniel 9:26-27 indicates that during the Tribulation period, the Temple sanctuary will be in existence. Currently, in Jerusalem, several organizations are preparing to rebuild this sacred structure. The Temple Institute has prepared the utensils and artifacts needed to perform the Temple rites, from the clothes the priests are to wear to the gold crown for the High Priest. Men from the tribe of Levi are being trained to perform the Temple duties.

Numbers 19:2 establishes that a red heifer must be used for the purification, a ritual which will once again be part of the Temple ceremonies in the end times. For over 2000 years, there has been no acceptable red heifer. In 1995, one was bred in the United States, and several have been shipped to Israel since then.

According to Ezekiel 45:12-13,16, the shekel will be used as the offering to the Messiah at the Temple during the Millennium. In 1980, the shekel was restored as the official unit of exchange in Israel.

The prophet Zechariah foretold in Zechariah 12:6 that military victories would be a prelude to the Revelation of Christ—an event which will take place at the end of the Great Tribulation. The overwhelming victories of Israel over the vastly superior armies of other Middle East nations in several conflicts since 1948 have amazed the world.

In spite of the powerful evidence to Jews today that Jesus Christ is the promised Redeemer, according to Romans 11:25, they will continue in unbelief "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

Another indication that the last days are upon us is the fact that we are living in the time of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the Latter Rain foretold by Joel (Joel 2:23) and by the Apostle James (James 5:7). Beginning in the early 1900s, God gave a sign to an unbelieving world by restoring the baptism of the Holy Ghost as it was given in the "early rain" on the Day of Pentecost. Clearly, the Holy Spirit is in the world and is preparing a Bride for Jesus.

Without a doubt, the stage has been set. We are seeing the fulfillment of the prophesied events which were to herald the Rapture of the Church. Jesus could come back for His Bride, the Church, at any moment! We read in 1 John 3:3 that "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." The knowledge that Christ's coming is drawing closer should motivate us to prepare, to pursue Christlikeness, and to put off all the things that pertain to our former lives without Christ.

[1] See James 5:7-9; 1 Peter 4:7; Hebrews 10:24-25 and 1 John 2:18 for several examples of New Testament exhorting believers to live in a manner that anticipates Jesus' imminent return.

[2] 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13

[3] See Jeremiah 24:5-10; Hosea 9:10

[4] Jeremiah 16:14-15

[5] Joel 2:1, 23

[6] Zephaniah 3:8-9

The Rapture of the Church

The Second Coming of Jesus to this earth will be just as literal, physical, and visible as was His going away (Acts 1:11). Though the Lord's return is commonly spoken of as His "Return" or "Appearing," the writer of Hebrews specifically says "second time" in Hebrews 9:28. Jesus' use of the word "again," in John 14:3 means "a second time." Christ's second coming is mentioned or referred to in almost every New Testament book,[1] and the theme of imminence is interwoven through all the passages of Scripture concerning this subject.

The Second Coming of Christ encompasses two separate events: the Rapture of the Church, when Christ comes to claim His waiting Bride; and the Revelation of Christ, when Jesus comes with His saints from Heaven to execute judgment upon the ungodly and to set up His Kingdom and reign on this present earth for a thousand years. Although there will be an interval of time between these two events, it is repeatedly emphasized that Christ's return will take place suddenly and without warning.[2]

During Jesus' earthly ministry, He taught that He would one day come back to this earth, and repeatedly instructed His disciples to be prepared for His return.[3] His assurance that He would come back again was one of the promises He comforted His disciples with prior to His death. (See John 14:2-3.) The Early Church lived in anticipation of His soon return, and believers of every era are challenged in God's Word to live in that same continual state of readiness.[4]

Many promises of Christ's Second Coming are found in the words of Jesus and His Apostles.[5] The hope of the resurrection of deceased saints that takes place at that time runs like a thread through the whole of Scripture.[6]

The Rapture of the Church will occur when Jesus calls His followers (both Gentile and Jewish believers) with a trumpet blast, and they will be removed from the earth and transported to be with Him in the heavens. The Rapture will be an instantaneous happening, and will take place suddenly, unexpectedly, and lightning fast—in the "twinkling of an eye" according to 1 Corinthians 15:52 and Matthew 24:27. Jesus will descend from Heaven "with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God" (1 Thessalonians 4:16). The word *rapture* means, "being carried away in body or spirit," and this is literally what will happen.[7] First, those who have died as Christians will arise from their graves to meet Him in the clouds. Then those who are alive, and who have prepared themselves for His coming, will be changed in a moment and will be caught up to join Christ and the resurrected dead in the air. (See 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:20-38,51-54.)

In the interval between the Rapture of the Church and the Revelation of Christ, the world will experience the Great Tribulation, during which time the wicked will experience the outpouring of God's wrath during the reign of the Antichrist.[8]

There are a number of clear Scriptural differences between the two appearances of Christ. At the Rapture, Christ will come in the air; at the Revelation He will come to stand on the same Mount Olivet from which He ascended. At the Rapture, Christ comes *for* His Bride, the Church; at the Revelation, He comes *with* His Bride to rule the nations. The Rapture may occur at any moment; the Revelation cannot occur until the Antichrist has had his day upon the earth. The Rapture is near the beginning of the Great Tribulation; the Revelation is at the end of the Great Tribulation. The Rapture will take place silently, so far as the world of sinners is concerned; the Revelation will be witnessed by everyone. The Rapture is full of joy and delight for the saint of God; the Revelation is full of wrath and terror to them who have not obeyed the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The last promise of the Bible is one of Christ's soon coming, "Surely I come quickly" (Revelation 22:20). And the remainder of that verse, the last prayer in the Bible, asks that this great event take place quickly, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." As ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, let us always, in everything we say and do,

be "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

[1] The chapters in which it is explained most fully are Matthew 24 and 25, Luke 21, 1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 1 Thessalonians 4 and 5, and 2 Peter 3.

[2] 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 3:11; 16:15; 22:7,10

[3] Matthew 24:42-51; 25:1-13; Mark 13:37; Luke 12:37,40

[4] Luke 12:40; Philippians 4:5; Hebrews 10:37; James 5:7-9; Revelation 22:10

[5] Matthew 24:34; John 14:3; 1 Corinthians 1:7; 4:5; 15:23; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, 23; Titus 2:13; 1 Peter 5:4; 2 Peter 3:10-12

[6] Job 19:25-27; Psalm 49:15; 71:20; Hosea 13:14; John 5:25; 6:40; 11:23-25; Acts 24:15; 1 Corinthians 15:22-24; 2 Corinthians 4:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

[7] The word *rapture* does not occur in Scripture; it is derived from the Latin Vulgate translation of 1 Thessalonians 4:17, where the phrase "caught up" is a translation of the Latin *rapturo*. The same word is used in Acts 8:39 to describe Philip being "caught away" after baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch. The Acts account states that the Spirit of the Lord was the source that caught Philip away, and the same source will remove believers from the earth at the time of the Rapture.

[8] Daniel 12:1-2; Matthew 24:15-31; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. See the sections of this manual on *The T ribulation and the Antichrist*, and *The Revelation of Christ and Armageddon* for more complete summaries of these subjects.

Counsel for Ministers:

There are differing viewpoints regarding when the Rapture will occur. The *posttribulational* viewpoint is that the Church will go through the Tribulation, and that those who have already died will not be resurrected until after the Tribulation period. *Midtribulational* teaching holds that the Rapture of the church will occur at the midpoint of the seven years of Tribulation, and thus, that only the last half of Daniel's seventieth week is deemed the Tribulation. In the *pretribulational* view of the Rapture, Christians are caught up out of the world before the Tribulation, which lasts for the entire seven-year period. We hold the pretribulational view.

However, since no man knows precisely when the Rapture will take place in relation to moment the seven-year period begins, as ministers we must be careful to allow for the possibility that the Rapture will occur at a point other than at the exact beginning of the Great Tribulation.

We base our pretribulational position upon the fact that the Holy Spirit is the One who presently restrains the wicked one, and He will be taken away when the saints are raptured (see 2 Thessalonians 2:7). The Church is assured that "God hath not appointed us to wrath," (1 Thessalonians 5:9), and that those who wait for His appearing from Heaven will be delivered "from the wrath to come" (1 Thessalonians 1:10; see also Revelation 3:10). Rather than trying to establish exactly when the seven year tribulation begins, we must emphasize the importance of being prepared for Christ's return to this earth for His Bride.

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

In the Apostle John's vision recorded in Revelation 19:7-9, he observed the heavenly throng worshipping and praising God because the "Marriage Supper of the Lamb" was about to begin. The living and the dead who gather with Christ at the Rapture[1] will take part in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. This event will take place in Heaven (see Revelation 19:1) while the Great Tribulation is taking place on earth.

The concept of the Marriage Supper is best understood when considered in reference to the wedding customs in the time of Christ. There were three main parts to the marriage covenant during that time. First, a bride was chosen and the marriage contract was agreed upon between the parents of the bride and the bridegroom. This was called the betrothal period, and was similar to what we would call an engagement today, except that the contract was binding.[2] The second step usually took place about a year later, when the bridegroom, accompanied by his friends, went in procession to the house of the bride at midnight. The bride was aware this event would take place, though unaware of the exact day or hour, so she would be ready with her maidens. They would join the procession, which would end at the bridegroom's house.[3] The third part of the ceremony was the wedding feast itself, which might go on for several days.[4]

What John pictured in his vision in Revelation is the wedding feast of Jesus Christ, the implication being that the first two phases had already taken place. The first phase took place on earth when each individual believer entered into a spiritual "contract" with God. The second phase occurs at the Rapture, when Christ comes to claim His Bride, the Church, and take her to the Father's house. At the Marriage Supper, the third phase, the eternal union of Christ and His Bride will be actualized.

We live in the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. God has sent His Spirit into the world to seek a Bride for His Son. When the Bride has made herself ready, and when the time appointed by God has arrived, the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, will come in the azure above to catch away His Bride in the Rapture of the saints.

Following the Rapture, the saints will "appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:10).[5] This is not a judgment for sinful deeds, since those will already have been placed under the Blood, but rather a time when the saints will receive their rewards for faithful service. The parable of the pounds (see Luke 19:12-19) provides a visual image of this. Among the rewards to the overcomer will be "to eat of the tree of life" (Revelation 2:7), to have power over the nations (Revelation 2:26), to be given the "morning star" (Revelation 2:28), and to be clothed in "white raiment" (Revelation 3:5). Jesus said, "I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels" (Revelation 3:5) and promised that he would grant the overcomer "to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Revelation 3:21).

The wedding of the Bridegroom and His Bride, and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, are the glorious events which consummate and fulfill the aim of Christ as described in Ephesians 5:27, "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." The readiness of the Bride is a reason for rejoicing, for we read, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (Revelation 19:7).

The guests at the wedding feast are privileged individuals, for John the Revelator was instructed to write "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:9). Jesus Christ will serve them at the Marriage Supper (see Luke 12:37).

The visual imagery of a city is also used to describe the Bride of Christ, who inhabits the New Jerusalem, "the holy city" in Revelation 21:2 and 10. The city is described as "holy" because its inhabitants are holy.

[1] See the section of this manual on *The Rapture of the Church* for a more complete summary of this subject.

[2] Mary and Joseph were in the betrothal period when she was found to be with child. See Matthew 1:18 and Luke 2:5.

[3] The parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1-13 illustrates this aspect of the wedding ceremony.

[4] An example is found in the account of the wedding at Cana of Galilee, in John 2:1-2.

[5] The primary passages related to the judgment seat of Christ (translated from the Greek word *bema*) are Romans 14:10-12 and 1 Corinthians 3:13-15. Only saints will be at the judgment seat of Christ, which is distinguished in Scripture from the Great White Throne Judgment (translated from the Greek word *thronos*). There is no Biblical basis to suggest a general judgment in which the followers of Christ and sinners are judged together.

The Great Tribulation and the Antichrist

Between the Rapture of the Church and the Revelation of Christ, while the Marriage Supper of the Lamb is taking place in Heaven, the fury of the Great Tribulation will take place on earth.[1] Chapters six through nineteen of the Book of Revelation include a description of that time of catastrophic trouble and terrible suffering when God will pour out judgment upon Israel and the unbelieving world.

The Tribulation will last seven years.[2] It will begin with a covenant made between Israel and a world leader, identified in Scripture as the Antichrist, and it will end with the physical return of Jesus Christ to set up His kingdom on earth. In prophesying of this time, the prophet Daniel said, "There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation" (Daniel 12:1). Jesus affirmed Daniel's prophecy, saying, "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved" (Matthew 24:21-22).[3]

The dominant figure of the Tribulation will be the Antichrist[4]—the "man of sin," who will be revealed after the Bride of Christ has been taken out of the world. Scripture alludes to him as "the son of perdition" and also the "beast,"[5] for just as Christ was the express image of the Father, so the Antichrist will be the incarnation of Satan. He will be a phenomenally persuasive and brilliant man, but a monster of iniquity, and the greatest imposter in the history of the world. He will be part of an evil trinity, allied with the Dragon (identified as Satan) and a second beast referred to as the False Prophet (see Revelation 12-13).

Initially, the Antichrist will expand his empire through diplomatic ventures and subtle "peace" diplomacy. Only later will his diabolical nature be revealed—a cruel and despotic ruler who will blaspheme and proclaim himself to be God.[6] His ascent to power will be rapid, and authority will be given to him from Satan. He will deceive the nations of the world, and power will be given him "over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (Revelation 13:7). All whose names are not written in the book of life will worship him (see Revelation 13:8).

As the Antichrist gains control of the world during the Tribulation period, those who follow him will receive an identifying mark.[7] The mark or seal of the beast will be literal; it will be placed in the right hand or forehead of his followers. Those who do not have the mark will not be allowed to buy or sell, and if they continue to resist his edicts and dominion, they will suffer martyrdom. Those who receive the mark, however, will seal their own eternal damnation, for the Word says, "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb" (Revelation 14:9-10).

The spirit of Antichrist is at work in the world today; we read that "the mystery of iniquity doth already work" (2 Thessalonians 2:7). His influence is the force behind every attempt to discredit the authority of the Bible, the deity of Christ, and the reality of His Second Coming. Any teaching that causes people to doubt the efficacy of the Blood of Jesus and its power to eradicate sin originates in the kingdom of Satan (see 1 John 4:3). The Antichrist's efforts are held in check now by the Spirit of God and the prayers of the saints. However, when the Church of God is taken out of the world at the Rapture, and the Spirit of God is no longer present to restrain the Antichrist's activities, he will operate in full sway and dominion.

After the Bride is taken away in the Rapture, God will turn back to the Jews.[8] During this time, the Antichrist will deceive the Jewish people. He will make a treaty with them during the first part of his reign; among other things, this treaty will allow them to resume the ancient sacrificial system of temple worship. In the middle of his seven-year rule, however, he will ruthlessly break his covenant. He will "cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease" (Daniel 9:27), substituting worldwide worship of himself and his image. This action will reveal to the Jews his demonic nature, and somewhere in this time period, 144,000 Israelites will accept Christ and the seal of God will be placed upon their foreheads as a symbol of protection (see Revelation 7:1-8 and 14:1-5). When the Antichrist's covenant is broken, tribulation such as has never

been known before will be poured out upon the Jews. According to Zechariah 13:8-9, one third of them will survive and will cry for their Messiah to come and deliver them.

Two beings, referred to in Scripture as "witnesses," will preach the truth of Jesus Christ for three and one-half years and will be killed by the Antichrist at the midpoint of the seven-year tribulation. After three days, they will be resurrected and will ascend to Heaven in a cloud.[9]

During the Tribulation, God's judgment and righteous fury will be poured out upon the earth in the form of horrendous environmental catastrophes. The tribulation plagues are comprised of three groups of seven: the seven seal judgments, the seven trumpet judgments, and the seven bowl judgments.[10] Jesus is the One who will open the first seal judgment and initiate the judgments.

Seven Seal Judgments (described in Revelation 6:1-14; 8:1-6):

1. White horse with a rider holding a bow and wearing a crown. This depicts the Antichrist coming to power.
2. Red horse with a rider who takes peace from the earth. This depicts the wars that will occur during the first part of the Tribulation.
3. Black horse with a rider holding scales. This depicts a time of severe food shortages.
4. Pale (or sickly) horse with a rider named "Death and Hell." This depicts the many people who will die because of various wars, starvation, and pestilences.
5. This seal depicts those who will be martyred for refusing to worship the Antichrist.
6. A great earthquake, cosmic disturbances, and the mountains and islands of the earth will be moved from their places. The rich and poor will try to hide from the devastation.
7. A time of silence in Heaven before the trumpet judgments are unleashed.

Seven Trumpet Judgments (described in Revelation 8:7-15; 9:1-20; 11:15-19):

1. A terrible storm of hail and fire mingled with blood will destroy one third of all vegetation on the earth.
2. A meteor will hit the earth, causing the sea to become like blood. This will kill one-third of all creatures in the sea, and destroy one-third of the world's shipping.
3. A star will fall from the sky and poison one-third of all fresh water, killing many people.
4. The sun, moon, and stars will be darkened by one-third, and both the day and night will not be lit for one-third of their time.
5. Terrible locust-like beings will be released from underground. Their attacks will be very painful and will last five months.
6. Four demons are released. An army of 200 million horsemen will kill one-third of the earth's remaining population.
7. This trumpet releases the seven bowl judgments.

Seven Bowl Judgments (described in Revelation 16:2-21):

1. People who have taken the mark of the Antichrist will develop ghastly sores on their bodies.
2. The oceans will chemically change and become like congealed blood, causing everything in the sea to die.
3. The fresh waters on earth will become like blood.

4. The sun's rays will scorch the people on earth with tremendous heat.
5. Great darkness will come upon the earth, and terrible pain will afflict its inhabitants.
6. The River Euphrates will dry up, setting the state for the Battle of Armageddon.
7. A huge earthquake will take place, so devastating that the mountains and islands will disappear. A terrible hailstorm, with hailstones weighing close to one hundred pounds, will cause men to blaspheme God.

Toward the end of the Tribulation period, the kings of the world will gather their armies to battle against Jerusalem and the Jews in the Battle of Armageddon. When it seems like their victory is assured, the Revelation of Christ will take place. Jesus Christ will return to earth with His armies to defeat the world powers.[11]

[1] The Bible also alludes to this period as the Day of the Lord (Isaiah 2:10-22; Joel 3:1-16; Zechariah 14:1-13, 12-15; 1 Thessalonians 5:2), a day of wrath (Zephaniah 1:15); and the time of Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah 30:7).

[2] Daniel 9:24-27 provides the key to understanding the chronology of end time events. Gabriel revealed to Daniel that it would take seventy weeks to accomplish a series of goals. These "weeks" are periods of seven years each. The seventy weeks, or 490 years, is divided into periods. Bible scholars believe that the first period of seven weeks (49 years) is the time it took Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem. The next period, sixty-two weeks (434 years) led up to Jesus' crucifixion when the Messiah was cut off. These two periods total 69 weeks, leaving one remaining week. Verse 27 indicates that the last week of seven years will begin when "he [the Antichrist] shall confirm the covenant" with Israel. This will allow Israel to build the Third Temple and reinstate the sacrificial system. However in the middle of the week (or three and a half years into the Tribulation) the Antichrist will break the covenant, cause the Temple sacrifices to cease, and require the world to worship him. According to Revelation 13:5, this will go on for forty-two months, or three and one-half years.

[3] The Church may endure tribulation to a certain extent in the last days, but the full fury and the wrath of God cannot burst upon the world until the overcoming, Bloodwashed saints have been taken out of the world in the Rapture.

[4] Scripture that describe the Antichrist include Daniel 8:23-25; 2 Thessalonians 2:79; Revelation 13:1-10.

[5] 2 Thessalonians 2:3 and Revelation 13:1-5

[6] 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 13:5-6

[7] Revelation 13:16-18

[8] Because of the judgment being poured out on the Jews, the Tribulation is also known as the time of Jacob's Trouble. Scriptures reveal that the Tribulation will discipline and purify Israel, bringing many of those who survive to repentance and obedience, that God might fulfill the covenant He made with their fathers. See Romans 11:25-29 and Zechariah chapters 12-14.

[9] Revelation 11:3-12

[10] These judgments are to be taken literally and not allegorically (or symbolically). Just as God poured out judgment on Egypt in the Old Testament through the plagues, He will orchestrate the cataclysmic events on earth during the Tribulation period to send judgment on a world that has rejected Him.

[11] Zechariah 12:1-9; 13:8-9; 14:1-9; Revelation 19:11-21

The Revelation of Christ and Armageddon

At the climax of the Tribulation period,[1] all the armies of the Antichrist and the false prophet will lead the armies of the world in a final assault against Israel. In their rage, they will especially ravage Jerusalem and destroy a great part of Israel's population.[2]

Just when it seems that their victory is sure and Israel will be obliterated, the Revelation of Christ, the second stage of Christ's coming, will take place. The heavens will open and Christ will return to this earth in power and great glory. His feet will touch the Mount of Olives (see Zechariah 14:4-5). Revelation 1:7 indicates that "every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."[3] He will be followed by an army of the holy angels and the saints of God, clothed in white raiment and riding on white horses.[4]

A bloody battle will take place between Christ and His armies against the Antichrist and Satan and all the armies of this world. This conflict will be concentrated in a place called Armageddon,[5] and will eclipse every other war known on earth. Jesus Christ will wreak vengeance and judgment upon the enemies of Israel. At this point in time, "the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his [God's] wrath" (Revelation 16:19) will be delivered. The Antichrist and his followers will be defeated and slain,[6] and the fowls will devour their flesh. The blood of the slain will run to the horses' bridles for a distance of two hundred miles.[7] The Beast (the Antichrist) and the false prophet will be taken and cast alive into the lake of fire where they will remain forever.[8] Satan will be cast into the bottomless pit where he will spend a thousand years. (He will be loosed again for a short season at the end of the Millennial Reign, and will go out to deceive the nations at that time, before finally being cast into the lake of fire also.)[9] The surviving Jews will accept their Messiah, whom they have so long rejected. "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son" (Zechariah 12:10).

[1] See the sections of this manual titled *The Tribulation and the Antichrist*, and *The Revelation of Christ and Armageddon* for more complete summaries of these subjects.

[2] See Zechariah 12:1-3; 13:8-9; 14:1-3; and Revelation 16:14.

[3] See also Matthew 24:29-31.

[4] Matthew 25:31; Jude 14-15; Revelation 19:11-16

[5] The word *Armageddon,* found only in Revelation 16:16, comes from a Hebrew word *Har-Magedone*, which means "Mount Megiddo." The exact location is not known for certain, because there is no mountain called Meggido. However, since *har* can also mean "hill," the most likely location is the hill country around the plain of Meggido and the nearby plain of Esdraelon, which are located about sixty miles north of Jerusalem. Many battles have been fought in that region throughout history.

[6] Zechariah 14:12; Revelation 19:15,21

[7] Revelation 14:20

[8] Revelation 19:20; Daniel 7:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:8-9

[9] Revelation 20:13

Christ's Millennial Reign

The Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ,[1] a thousand-year era of peace on this earth, will be ushered in by the Revelation of Christ when He comes back to this earth with ten thousands of His saints from the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The Battle of Armageddon will take place, marking the end of the Great Tribulation. Following the judgment of the nations, when Christ judges the great Gentile world powers,[2] He will institute His earthly Kingdom.

Jesus will rule the nations of all the earth from the seat of His government in Jerusalem.[3] The Apostles will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.[4] The raptured saints, including the prophets and martyrs from ages past, will receive positions of authority in the ruling of the world, according to their faithfulness in life.[5] Those who resisted the Antichrist and paid with their lives during the Tribulation will be raised from the dead to join the raptured saints and will also take part in the Millennial Reign.[6]

This will be a time of righteousness and rest, in which the people of earth will enjoy a "Garden of Eden" existence. The curse, which came upon the earth when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, will be lifted from creation, and the glorious and everlasting Kingdom of Christ and His saints will be established in peace and prosperity. The Millennial Kingdom will have the following characteristics:

Satan's powers will be held in abeyance. An angel will come from Heaven and bind Satan for a thousand years, casting him into a bottomless pit. For the first time since the fall, people will dwell in the world without the power of Satan to tempt or torment them. (See Revelation 20:1-3.)

There will be universal peace. Nation will no longer fight against nation, and preparations for warfare will be over. (See Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3-4.)

Sickness and disease will be eliminated, and mankind will enjoy longevity. After the curse has been lifted, all who remain will come under the rule and dominion of Christ and will be set free from every disease and sickness. (See Isaiah 35:5-6; 65:20.)

Animal nature will be changed. The venom of the serpent, the sting of the scorpion, the instinct to kill in the wolf and the lion—everything that is savage and brought on by the curse in the animal kingdom will be done away with. (See Isaiah 11:6-9.)

Vegetation will be luxuriant. As a result of the curse, vegetation in our world today is stunted. During the Millennium, it will once again grow lushly, and even arid areas will flourish. (See Isaiah 35:1-2; 55:13.)

The population will prosper. Those who populate the earth following the Great Tribulation will rebuild and enjoy the rewards of their own labor; there will be no slavery. (See Isaiah 65:21-23.)

Annual visits will be made to Jerusalem. People will make yearly visits to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts. (See Isaiah 2:2-3; Zechariah 14:16.)

Nations will worship God. Christ's government will be a theocracy. All nations that remain will be brought into subjection to the Son of God, and will obey the Word of God. (See Micah 4:1-2; Zechariah 8:20-22; 14:16.)

During the Millennial Reign, God will make a new covenant with the people of Israel.[7] After having been purged, judged, and restored during the Tribulation, the surviving remnant of the Jews will accept Christ as their Messiah and King, and will submit wholeheartedly to His righteous governance.[8] The land will be divided among the tribes as described in Ezekiel 48:1-35.

At the close of the Millennium, there will be another outbreak of evil, when Satan shall be "loosed [for] a little season" (Revelation 20:3). A final rebellion will take place, as Satan will go out to deceive the nations

in the four quarters of the earth, and will gather them together to battle against God in a conflict known as the second Battle of Gog and Magog.[9] The armies will surround the city of Jerusalem. At that point, fire will come down from Heaven and destroy them. The devil will be cast into the lake of fire for eternity.[10]

[1] *Millennium* is the Latin word for a "thousand years." It is used in Revelation 20:1-15 where "the thousand years" period is mentioned six times.

[2] See also 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10, and a parable of the judgment of nations in Matthew 25:31-46. In the Old Testament, the prophet Joel indicates that just as the land in his day was helpless before its devastators, the nations will be helpless before God who will judge them on behalf of Judah and Jerusalem (see Joel 3:11-17). This judgment is not to be confused with the Great White Throne Judgment, which takes place after the Millennial Reign of Christ.

[3] Isaiah 2:1-4; 11:1-5; 24:23; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Zechariah 14:9

[4] Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:28-30

[5] See Jude 14-15. The fact that the saints will reign with Christ during this time is declared several times in Scripture. See 1 Corinthians 6:2; Revelation 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:9-10; 20:6.

[6] See Revelation 20:4. This consummates the First Resurrection, of which Christ is the first fruits, the raptured saints the main harvest, and the Tribulation saints the gleanings.

[7] Jeremiah 31:31-33

[8] Zechariah 12:10; 13:9

[9] Magog (region of Gog) is a country of undetermined location, generally described as in a northerly direction from Palestine. In the Bible, *Gog* means "mountain" and Magog appears to be a country or people of which Gog was the prince. These are representatives of the nations under the leadership of Satan that will war against the Kingdom of God. The Bible does not indicate whether the first Battle of Gog and Magog, in which a confederacy of nations will war against Israel, will occur before or after the Rapture.

[10] Revelation 20:7-10

The Great White Throne Judgment

The Great White Throne Judgment (also referred to as the Final Judgment), is described in Revelation 20:11-15, and takes place after the Battle of Gog and Magog. This judgment is the event which closes the Millennium. At that time, the wicked—both those who are yet living and those resurrected from the dead—will be assembled to stand before God, who sits upon the Throne. (The righteous will not be present at the Great White Throne Judgment, their sins having already been forgiven and their faithfulness rewarded.[1]) The throne of judgment is white, symbolizing the absolute purity of the Judge.

At the Great White Throne Judgment, all the unsaved—regardless of what status they achieved on earth—will stand before God in the agony and shame of their sins. The record books will be opened, and all present will be judged according to their deeds done in the body. Each sinner will be face to face with God alone, and will be doomed because he did not accept God's salvation. Because none of their names will be found written in the Book of Life, each will be sentenced to everlasting punishment and cast into the lake of fire, where they will remain throughout eternity.

[1] The saints receive their rewards at a time previous to the pronouncement of condemnation upon the unfaithful and the ungodly. See the section of this manual on *The Marriage Supper of the Lamb* for a more complete summary of this subject.

Counsel for Ministers:

It is important to understand and distinguish between the various judgments described in Scripture. The Bible teaches that there will be judgment for every person who has ever lived; according to Romans 14:12, "every one of us shall give account of himself before God." However, all will not be judged at the same time. Those who have been justified have had their sins judged beforehand (see 1 Timothy 5:24) by confessing them and putting them under the Blood of Jesus; they have been pardoned and their names have been recorded in the Book of Life. In contrast, those who have not come to God for forgiveness are storing up wrath against themselves (Romans 2:5), and ultimately will be judged for their sins.

The New Heaven and the New Earth

Scripture teaches that at the Great White Throne Judgment, "The earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them" (Revelation 20:11).[1] The present heavens and earth, which have been polluted by the activities of sinful man, will be destroyed by fire. Then God will establish the "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13). In describing his vision on the isle of Patmos, John the Revelator wrote, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea" (Revelation 21:1).[2]

The concept of a new heaven and a new earth is also found in the Old Testament. Isaiah foretold, "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isaiah 65:17).[3]

The new heavens and the new earth will surpass anything man is capable of describing. Untainted by the presence of Satan or any of his followers, no unclean thing will be there,[4] and there will be no more death, sorrow, nor pain.[5] There will be no more curse,[6] and no more night, for "the glory of the Lord did lighten it" (Revelation 21:23).[7]

The heavenly headquarters for the universe—the New Jerusalem—will descend from Heaven "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:2).[8] It will be a perfect cube, with twelve gates of pearls upon which are inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.[9] Its streets will be paved with gold, and its foundations garnished with all manner of precious stones, in which will be the names of the twelve Apostles.[10] The New Jerusalem will be the dwelling place of God.[11] The redeemed will have unrestricted access to God and fellowship and communion with Him,[12] enjoying forever the benefits of His favor, for the new heavens and earth will never pass away.

[1] In ancient minds, "heavens" referred to either the skies and space, or the realm in which God dwells. Thus, we can conclude that in these descriptions of end time events, "heaven" does not refer to the eternal abode of God, but rather to the expanse of the universe.

[2] The word translated *new* in both 2 Peter 3:13 and Revelation 21:1 is not the Greek word *neos*, which describes something that has recently come into existence. Rather, it is from the Greek word *kainos*, which implies "freshness" as contrasted with that which has been marred through age. It seems to indicate a fulfillment—the earth, heaven, and seas pass away into a fresh start in fulfillment of God's initial design.

[3] Other Old Testament Scriptures that reference the destruction of the current heaven and earth and a new heaven and new earth include Psalm 102:25-26 and Isaiah 51:6; 66:22. New Testament references include Matthew 5:18; 24:35 as well as 2 Peter 3:1013, and Revelation 21 and 22.

[4] Revelation 21:8,27

[5] Revelation 21:4; 22:2

[6] Revelation 22:3

[7] Revelation 21:25; 22:5

[8] The New Jerusalem is also called the Tabernacle of God, the Holy City, the City of God, the Celestial City, and Heavenly Jerusalem. It is referred to in the Bible in several places (Isaiah 52:1; Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 12:22-24; 13:14) but is most fully described in chapter 21 of the Book of Revelation.

[9] Revelation 21:12, 21

[10] Revelation 21:14, 19-21

[11] Revelation 21:3, 22-23

[12] Revelation 22:4

Hell, The Place of Eternal Punishment

The Bible clearly and explicitly teaches that Hell is a real and literal place of torment to which the wicked and unbelieving are sent after death. It is a place where sinners will experience total and eternal separation from God and unspeakable agony of an unrelenting nature.[1]

Three words in the Bible's original languages are translated *hell* in English. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the word used to describe the realm of the dead is *sheol*.[2] It means the "place of the dead" or the "place of departed souls/spirits." The New Testament Greek word translated *hell* is *hades*,[3] which also refers to "the place or state of the dead." The Greek word *gehenna* is also used in the New Testament, and is derived from the Hebrew word *hinnom*. *Gehenna* is never translated *grave* or *pit* but always refers to the place of everlasting punishment.[4]

Verses throughout God's Word offer descriptions of Hell. It is a place of destruction,[5] a lake of fire and brimstone,[6] a devouring, everlasting burning where "the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:44),[7] a bottomless pit,[8] a furnace of fire,[9] and a place of torments.[10] There, the lost will be compelled to endure darkness forever,[11] for the punishment there is not one of quick destruction but everlasting agony.[12]

This place of eternal punishment was "prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41), but God has decreed that the wicked and those who forget Him will also be cast there because of their sin.[13] It will be the abode of murderers, fornicators, liars, the abominable, the fearful and unbelieving, sorcerers, and the cursed of God.[14]

There the condemned will have "no rest day nor night" (Revelation 14:11). They will "drink of the wine of the wrath of God" (Revelation 14:10), and feel His unrestrained vengeance.[15] They will wail and gnash their teeth,[16] and the smoke of their torment will ascend forever and ever.[17] They will experience shame and everlasting contempt,[18] and through an endless eternity these hopeless souls will also agonize over the realization that they are there because of their own willful, deliberate choice, or careless neglect of the day and time of salvation.[19]

In the Biblical account of Lazarus and the rich man (see Luke 16:19-31) we see that the lost feel the complete reality of the pangs and torments of Hell. The rich man could talk. He could hear, feel, see, and remember. He could look ahead in dread anticipation. He had concern for his family, and a desire for relief from his pain. He had a conscience, and he had regret. It is clear that he knew his state was eternally fixed, for he never requested even temporary release from the place of torment.

Through the provision made by Jesus, mankind can escape this eternal fate.[20]

[1] Luke 16:24; Mark 9:45-46

[2] The word *Sheol* is translated *Hell* in the following places: Deuteronomy 32:22; 2 Samuel 22:6; Job 11:8; 22:6; Psalm 9:17; 16:10; 18:5; 55:15; 86:13; 11:63; 139:8; Proverbs 5:5; 7:27; 9:18; 15:11, 24; 23:14; 27:20; Isaiah 5:14; 14:9,15; 28:15,18; 57:9; Ezekiel 31:16,17; 32:21,27; Amos 9:2; Jonah 2:2 and Habakkuk 2:5. It is translated *grave* in the following places: Genesis 37:35; 42:38; 44:29, 31; 1 Samuel 2:6; 1 Kings 2:6, 9; Job 7:9; 14:13; 17:13; 21:13; 24:19; Psalm 6:5; 303; 31:17; 49:14,15; 88:3; 89:48; 141:7; Proverbs 1:12; 30:16; Ecclesiastes 9:10; Songs of Solomon 8:6; Isaiah 14:11; 38:10,18; Ezekiel 31:15; and Hosea 13:14. It is translated *pit* in the following places: Numbers 16:30, 33 and Job 17:16.

[3] The word *Hades* is translated *Hell* in the following places: Matthew 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts

2:27, 31; Revelation 1:18; 6:8 and 20:13,14. It is translated *grave* only once, in 1 Corinthians 15:55.

[4] It occurs in the following places: Matthew 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5 and James 3:6.

[5] 2 Thessalonians 1:9

[6] Revelation 20:10, 14-15; 21:8

[7] Isaiah 33:14; Matthew 3:12; 25:41

[8] Revelation 20:13

[9] Matthew 13:41-42

[10] Luke 16:23

[11] Jude 13; Matthew 25:30

[12] Matthew 25:46

[13] Psalm 9:17

[14] Revelation 21:8

[15] Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:31

[16] Matthew 25:30

[17] Revelation 14:11

[18] Daniel 12:2

[19] 2 Corinthians 6:2

[20] John 3:16, 18

Counsel for Ministers:

For centuries, mankind has struggled with the biblical doctrine of eternal Hell, denying its existence or portraying it in a way that does not agree with Scripture. Some religious organizations teach annihilation, saying that people die as animals and have no form of existence after death. Others hold that Hell is not a literal burning place, or teach the existence of some form of temporary punishment as a means of purgation of the unjust after death.

Some question how a God of love and peace could send people to Hell. The answer is that He does not. Only those who willfully reject His Son Jesus as their source of salvation go to Hell. In this life, we are constantly offered an invitation from a God of love. However, He is also a holy and just God. He must punish the wicked who turn away from His holiness.

The Resurrection of the Dead

The Bible teaches not only the immortality of the soul but also the resurrection of the body.[1] Every individual who has ever lived will be resurrected, some to honor and glory and others to everlasting shame and contempt.[2]

There will be two resurrections. The first resurrection is that of all believers, the "blessed and holy," individuals over whom the "second death" has no power.[3] It corresponds with Jesus teaching of the "resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14) and the "resurrection of life" (John 5:29).

The first resurrection takes place in various stages. Christ was the first fruits of this resurrection.[4] There was a resurrection of saints who rose from the dead after Jesus' resurrection (see Matthew 27:52-53), appearing to many in Jerusalem. There will be the resurrection of "the dead in Christ" (1 Thessalonians 4:16) at the Lord's return,[5] and finally, the resurrection of the martyrs at the end of the Tribulation (see Revelation 20:4). Since these are all believers, they are all considered part of the first resurrection.[6]

The second resurrection will take place at the end of the Millennial Reign of Christ. According to Revelation 20:11-15, all the wicked dead will be raised at that time to stand before the Great White Throne and hear the judgment of God pronounced upon them for sins committed during their lifetime. This resurrection is connected to the second death. It corresponds with Jesus' teaching of the "resurrection of damnation" (John 5:29).

Those who are raised in the Rapture will come forth from their graves and will receive their glorified bodies at that time—bodies that will be like that of the Risen Christ, their Lord and Master.[7] When the Lord appeared to His disciples following His resurrection, He was a real Person, not a vague, intangible spirit.[8] He ate, talked, reasoned, remembered, could be handled and felt, had flesh and bones, issued commands, and felt compassion for those about Him. Yet He was not hindered by either space or barriers, entering rooms in spite of barred doors. He has promised that when He appears "we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

The resurrection is the great hope of the Christian.[9] It was also the hope of the Old Testament saints,[10] and will be the finished redemption of the godly of all ages.[11] The prospect of eventual resurrection is a supreme motivator. Paul the Apostle willingly suffered the loss of many things that he felt might hinder him; he died daily, he pressed toward the mark, he kept his own body under subjection—all that he might be counted worthy to "attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Philippians 3:11).

The soul does not sleep in the grave with the body; the soul is "absent from the body" after death takes place (2 Corinthians 5:69). It goes to a place of comfort and bliss if the life has been godly or to a place of torment if the life has been sinful (see Luke 16:19-31). Through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the Apostle Paul wrote that it is better to be present with the Lord and absent from the body than to live here in the body but be absent from the Lord. For him, and all believers, to live is Christ, but to die is gain. Paul expressed that he felt in a strait between two desires: being willing to live and carry on the work of God, but preferring to die and be with God forever (Philippians 1:19-24).

Two thousand years have elapsed since the resurrection of Christ, and yet the saints have not been raised. We do not know how many more weeks or months or years will elapse before that event. Just as there was an interval between the firstfruits and the ingathering of the harvest in Old Testament times, so there is an interval between the resurrection of Christ as the firstfruits, and His people as the harvest. In this period of time, the true believer watches and waits, secure in his hope of eventual resurrection.

[1] The resurrection of mortal bodies is explained most completely in 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

[2] Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29

[3] Revelation 2:11; 20:6,14

[4] See 1 Corinthians 15:20. The term *firstfruits* alludes to the firstfruits of the earth which, according to Leviticus 23:10-11 and Deuteronomy 26:2, were offered to the Lord. The firstfruits were what sprang out of the earth first, were ripened the soonest, and were the first of the harvest to be reaped and gathered in. In like manner, Christ first rose by His own power from the dead and ascended to Heaven. In His resurrection, Christ represented all believers. Their resurrection is secured by His; because He lives, we shall live also.

[5] See also 1 Corinthians 15:23.

[6] See also Revelation 7:9-17; 14:15; 20:4-5.

[7] 1 John 3:13; Philippians 3:21

[8] Luke 24:30-31; John 20:19, 26

[9] 1 Corinthians 15:13-19, 55-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Peter 1:3; 1 John 3:23

[10] Job 14:14; 19:25-27; Psalm 49:15; 71:20; Isaiah 26:19; Hosea 13:14

[11] Romans 8:19-23; Revelation 21:17

Biblical Ordinances

Water Baptism

Water baptism, the act of being covered completely in water as a symbol of burial, is an ordinance which is commanded in Scripture.[1] According to Hebrews 6:2, the doctrine of baptism is part of the "foundation" which must be laid in the Christian life. Baptism does not take away sin; rather, it bears witness to a new life in Christ which has already begun. It is a public proclamation that the individual being baptized has been saved from sin and has a purpose and intention to follow God's will in every detail.

The word *baptize* is a transliteration of a Greek word which means "to immerse or submerge." [2] Thus, water baptism is to be done by immersion in water.[3] According to the instruction of Jesus, baptism is done "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19).[4]

Water baptism is an outward symbol of an inward work—it illustrates a believer's entry into the righteousness of Christ through an identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. In Romans 6:3-4 we read: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The action of being immersed in water symbolizes dying to sin and being buried with Christ. The action of coming up out of the water llustrates arising to newness of life, just as Christ arose to new life at His Resurrection.[5]

Jesus taught that water baptism is an important step for the person who has been born again.[6] Just before He ascended into Heaven, He commissioned His disciples with these words: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Jesus also showed by personal example that water baptism is necessary. He was baptized by John at the start of His ministry and God's Spirit came upon Him in a singular manner at that time, showing the approval of God upon the practice of baptism as well as His approval of His Son. We read, "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16-17).

Examples in Scripture make it evident that after sinners are truly justified they should be baptized in water as soon as possible. There is no indication in Scripture that anyone was put on probation before being baptized in water. Philip baptized the eunuch immediately (Acts 8:3638), Paul and Silas baptized the Philippian jailer the same night he was saved (Acts 16:33), and Peter baptized the household of Cornelius when it was apparent that God had received them (Acts 10:4448). Delaying obedience to Jesus' command to be baptized in water opens the door for doubt and spiritual failure. New converts gain strength when they quickly make a public confession of the transformation in them and the stand they have taken for Christ.

While baptism is important, it is not a prerequisite for making Heaven. The thief on the cross was told by Jesus that he would be in Paradise that day, and he had no opportunity to be baptized in water before his death. Jesus himself never baptized anyone, but left the observance of that ordinance to His disciples.[7] If observance of the ordinance of water baptism was a necessary part of salvation from sin, Jesus would have baptized everyone who came to Him for forgiveness and pardon.

Those who have been baptized in water can look back upon the observation of this commandment of Christ

as a landmark in their spiritual walk. And because they obeyed, they can expect to grow spiritually.

[1] The word *ordinance* means "A direction or command of an authoritative nature; something ordained or decreed by God; an established religious rite." The ordinances instituted by Christ all employ symbols as expressions of the deeper spiritual meaning. Read the section of this manual titled *Water Baptismal Services* for specific information regarding how a water baptismal service is conducted.

[2] After an exhaustive examination of the Greek word *baptizein* in Greek literature, T. J. Conant in his book, *The Meaning And Use Of Baptizein,* [©1977 by Kregel Publications, a division of Kregel, Inc., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501] concluded that the best English word to convey the meaning of *baptizein* is *immerse***.** He said *immerse* makes known to contemporary hearers precisely the same meaning as *baptizein* did to those who first heard and read the Gospel in Greek. In all available Greek literature, both secular and religious, Conant found no example in which the word *baptizein* had any other meaning. Whenever the idea of total submergence was to be expressed, either literally or metaphorically**,** *baptizein* was the word used.

[3] None of the standard Greek lexicons support "sprinkling" or "pouring" as an interpretation of the Greek word translated *baptize*. There are completely different verbs in Greek for *pouring* (*cheno*) and *sprinkling* (*raino*). Also, the account of Jesus' own baptism demonstrates that baptism should be by immersion. We read that after His baptism by John, He "went up straightway out of the water" (Matthew 3:16); clearly if He "went up…out" of the water He must have first gone down into the water. Another example of baptism by immersion occurred when Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch in the desert. Again, Scripture records actions descriptive of baptism by immersion: they both went down into the water and after Philip baptized the new convert, they came up out of the water.

[4] In Acts 2:38, Peter admonished the observers at Pentecost to "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." This Scripture does not provide a basis for teaching that baptism should be done in Jesus' name only. Peter was simply stating that baptism is to be done according to the command of Jesus Christ—in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. When certain disciples at Ephesus told Paul that they had not heard of the Holy Ghost, he asked them, "Unto what then were ye baptized?" (Acts 19:3) The inference is that if they had been baptized according to Jesus' baptism, they would have heard mention of the Holy Ghost.

[5] See also Colossians 2:12.

[6] John 3:5

[7] See John 4:1-2 as well as Matthew 28:19.

Counsel for Ministers

The practice of infant baptism is not in accordance with Scripture. A candidate for water baptism must have received God's forgiveness in order to qualify. The danger of this teaching is that one who was baptized as an infant may grow up feeling their spiritual welfare was addressed through baptism, and never recognize his personal need for regeneration.

Failure to baptize an infant is not depriving the child of any spiritual blessings, since he is not old enough to appreciate the ordinance. An infant cannot choose, and therefore cannot either obey or disobey. Infants and young children who are too young to make a deliberate choice to serve God are covered by the Atoning Blood the same as those who have availed themselves of its pardoning influence through repentance and faith. Infants are innocent of willful transgression and are received by God if they die. Repentance is impossible for them and baptism is unnecessary.

When a child is saved at a very young age, we recommend that the parents consider waiting to have the child water baptized until he/she is old enough to consider the significance of the ordinance.

While no minimum age limit for water baptismal is given in Scripture, it is implied that the one being baptized will be old enough to have an understanding of the significance and meaning of the event. If children are too young to grasp the importance of what they are doing, they may benefit more by waiting until they are old enough to fully appreciate the meaning of the step they are taking.

The Lord's Supper

Jesus Christ himself instituted the ordinance of The Lord's Supper, a practice referred to in some religious circles as Holy Communion.[1] This sacred observance commemorates and typifies the suffering and death of the Lord, and we are to observe it until He returns.[2] In addition, it is a public testimony to the believer's faith in Jesus Christ and expectant hope of His return.

On the night before His crucifixion, knowing that He was soon to die, the Lord expressed His desire to celebrate a final Passover meal with His disciples. Luke 22:19-20 says that at the conclusion of this supper, "He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave it unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

This deliberate, ceremonial distribution of bread and the fruit of the vine was to become one of the greatest expressions of faith and adherence to the doctrines of Christianity. The death and resurrection of Christ is the bedrock of the Christian faith. When Jesus died on the cross, His body was broken and His blood was poured out; this was the price He paid for mankind's redemption. How vital it is that Christians periodically take time to ponder Jesus' great sacrifice!

Partaking of the Lord's Supper affords believers this opportunity. The Apostle Paul elaborated on this in his letter to the Corinthians: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:26). When Christ's followers observe the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, it is a proclamation and embracing of what Christ has done for them.

The emblems used in the observance—the bread[3] and the juice,[4] or "fruit of the vine" (Matthew 26:29)—are symbolic representations of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.[5] The breaking of bread portrays the breaking of Christ's Body in redemptive sacrifice. The pouring out of the juice represents the poured out Blood of Christ. Together they symbolize the sacrifice of the very life of Christ.

The observance of this ordinance is not a means of obtaining forgiveness for sins. Those who take part in the Lord's Supper should be born-again believers, for those who receive the symbolic emblems are commemorating the time when God's mercy drew them into grace and imparted Christ's righteousness to them. It is for believers only, those whose sins have been forgiven and whose names are written in Heaven.

Paul indicated that it is possible to "eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily."[6] For this reason, he told the believers in Corinth that before participating in the ordinance, each one should "examine [test] himself. . . " (1 Corinthians 11:27-28). They were to evaluate their actions and motives, making sure that they were participating at the sacred table in obedience and full commitment to the Lord. The Apostle let it be known that as a result of the misuse of the Lord's Supper, "many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (1 Corinthians 11:30).[7] Paul was warning the Corinthians that this was a solemn and sacred event, and taking part in an irreverent manner would bring guilt and condemnation.

When receiving the emblems, participants are admonished by Scripture to discern the Lord's body. This means that they must strive to comprehend the full meaning of the offering made for them on Calvary, gratefully and reverently focusing on the redemptive work of Christ.

There is healing in the Atonement, and the sick and infirm have a Scriptural right to ask God to heal their bodies when they are at the Lord's table. Just as the Blood of Christ was shed for the remission of sins, the plain teaching of Scripture is that His body was also broken for the physical healing of mankind.[8]

The Lord's Supper is far more than a mere ritual or a religious rite with moral or emotional influence. Blessings for obedience accrue to those who follow the commands of Jesus; a refusal to take of the emblems is to disobey His command. It is a glorious privilege to be able to partake of them and great peace is given every

one who does so in faith. As believers discern the Body and Blood of their Lord, they are brought closer to the Perfect Sacrifice, closer to God the Father who gave the unspeakable gift, and closer to the blessed Holy Spirit who has brought them to a realization of their spiritual needs.

[1] The word *ordinance* means "A direction or command of an authoritative nature; something ordained or decreed by God; an established religious rite." The ordinances instituted by Christ all employ symbols as expressions of the deeper spiritual meaning. However, we believe the blessing is found in the obedience to the Lord's instructions as opposed to something mystical about the rite iteself. Read the section of this manual titled *Lord's Supper Services*, under the heading *Public Services*, for specific information regarding how this ordinance is conducted.

[2] 1 Corinthians 11:26

[3] We use unleavened bread to represent the Body of Christ in our Lord's Supper services, because leaven is symbolic of sin.

[4] We use the unfermented juice of grapes in our ordinance services, because fermented juice can be intoxicating, and intoxication (drunkenness) is forbidden.

[5] Some take a literal view of Jesus' words "This is my body." (See Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; and 1 Corinthians 11:24.) They ascribe to the doctrine of transubstantiation, teaching that the bread and the fruit of the vine literally change into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ when consecrated, and that those who partake of the emblems receive the saving and sanctifying grace of God. This view is clearly non-Scriptural. The emblems are only representations of the Body and Blood of Christ; the bread and juice represent His body as we look back to His sacrifice at Calvary, just as the passover lamb represented it for those who looked forward to His death.

[6] The word *unworthily* means "irreverently" and relates to the balancing of weights. The implication is that if a person participates in the observance of the Lord's Supper with sin in his heart or in a casual and frivolous manner, he is not honoring, or balancing, the importance and sacredness of this memorial with an appropriate heart condition, attitude, and behavior.

[7] The word *weak*, translated from the Greek word *asthenes*, means "sickness." The term *sickly* (Greek *arrostos*), means "infirmity and decay."

[8] Isaiah 53:5; Matthew 8:16-17; 1 Peter 2:24

Foot Washing

The ordinance of foot washing is a specific command of Scripture.[1] The night before Jesus' death, He established the practice by washing His disciples' feet. He followed this action by telling them, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:14-15).

The dusty roads of Jesus' day, and the fact that sandals were the chief footwear, made foot-washing a necessary part of the hospitality culture of that day. A host would provide water for this to be done upon the arrival of guests, and the task typically was performed by the lowliest of menial servants or by the individuals themselves. On this occasion, however, Jesus had already shared supper with His disciples, so it was long after their arrival when He instituted this practice—clearly an observance that was different from the normal custom of the times.[2]

Luke points out that the disciples were arguing about who was the greatest among them.[3] This attitude of self-assertion was in stark contrast to Jesus' humility and loving example of serving others. No doubt the disciples would have been happy to wash their Master's feet, but they found it difficult to comprehend the lesson He was teaching them. When Jesus wrapped a towel around himself, as the lowliest slave would do, and began washing His disciples feet and drying them with the towel that girded Him, Peter was shocked. He emphatically remonstrated with the Lord, saying, "Thou shalt never wash my feet" (John 13:8). Jesus' answer shows the importance He placed upon this ordinance: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."

In closing, Jesus asked His disciples if they understood the meaning of what He had done. If their Master and Lord demonstrated love and service to the point of washing His disciples' feet, then the disciples should be willing to show the same to each other.

Foot washing was established as a rite of the Early Church. Some thirty years after Jesus established the ordinance, Paul listed several good works which he said were commendable, and included in that summary the washing of the saints' feet.[4] When Jesus ascended to Heaven, His last words to His disciples instructed them to teach others "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20). That directive certainly included the ordinance of foot washing.

Following the example Jesus set, we observe the ordinance of foot washing should immediately follow the Lord's Supper (John 13:2-4).[5] It is not for sinners, but for the saints only. A real child of God will look upon the observance of it as a privilege. It is a time of great joy, praise and thanksgiving, when many heavenly blessings are poured upon the body of believers (John 13:17).

[1] The word *ordinance* means "A direction or command of an authoritative nature; something ordained or decreed by God; an established religious rite." The ordinances instituted by Christ all employ symbols as expressions of the deeper spiritual meaning.

[2] Compare Genesis 18:4; 19:2; 24:32-33; 43:24; and 2 Samuel 11:8 with John 13:2-7.

[3] See Luke 22:24.

[4] 1 Timothy 5:9-10

[5] Read the section titled *Foot Washing Services* under the heading *Types of Services* for specific information regarding how this ordinance is conducted.

Biblical Practices

Restitution

Restitution is the act of making reparation or repayment for loss, damage, or injury that has been done to another. In the religious sense, it is a voluntary act, not an imposed punishment or repayment demanded by the one who experienced the loss.

The Bible is clear that Christians are to have a conscience "void of offense toward God, and toward man" (Acts 24:16), and that the desire to straighten out one's past is an evidence of true conversion. Thus, restitution may not be a requirement for salvation, but it certainly is a *result* of salvation. Genuine conversion puts within the heart of the newly-saved individual a desire to make every possible effort to correct and amend wrong actions of the past, and that includes making restoration whenever possible.[1]

Passages in both Old and New Testaments address this subject. Restitution was a strict requirement of the Old Testament Law. For example, it was required for harm to human life (Exodus 21:28-34), for theft, misuse, or destruction of another's property (Exodus 22:1-6), for harm to another's animals (Exodus 21:33-34), for sin against God's holy things (Leviticus 5:15-16), and for any unfaithfulness to God (Numbers 5:6-8).

Leviticus 6:2-5 describes situations in which not only was stolen property to be restored, but an additional one fifth of the value was to be given as recompense. Payment was made to the owner of the property (not to the government or a third party), and the compensation was to be accompanied by a guilt offering to the Lord. The guilty individual was instructed to make restitution to the one who was injured on the same day that he brought his sacrifice before the Lord, indicating the importance of making amends.

The moral principles of restitution that were instituted in the rites of the Mosaic Law were also exemplified in the New Testament. A New Testament example of restitution being voluntarily offered is found in the account of Zacchaeus, who evidenced a genuine desire to make right the wrongs of his past upon conversion. Though he had been well-known as a wicked and oppressive man, he declared to the Lord, "The half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" (Luke 19:8).[2] His words indicate that he had been guilty of defrauding people, but now was remorseful over his past deeds and was committed to making restitution.

Believers in the Early Church were instructed to "render therefore to all their dues" and "owe no man anything" (Romans 13:7-8), and these mandates could certainly include restitution.

Restitution clearly is necessary in matters where there has been fraud, theft, or dishonest gains. However, it is also necessary to make amends for wrongdoing that inflicted loss or pain upon others. When one has caused harm, restoration is a requirement.

A person is not exempt from making restitutions when the injured party is ignorant of the wrong. God requires that a just recompense be given to every man. Wrong deeds will either be made right in this world or be faced in the world to come (1 Timothy 5:24). The individual cannot always be governed by the civil statutes in determining whether he should make restitution, since civil laws permit many things that are not allowed by the law of God.

[1] There are some sins or offenses against others for which there is no adequate restitution. In such instances, a new Christian should not feel guilty about inability to make full restitution. When forgiveness of sins is

received through genuine repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, all sins are forgiven, whether or not restitution for them can be made.

[2] Zacchaeus' four-fold restoration possibly was based on Exodus 22:1, which said that a man who stole a sheep and slaughtered or sold it was required to pay the owner back with four sheep. However, Zacchaeus' offer was voluntary and not required by Jesus. The moral imperative is the overriding factor here, rather an a single or fourfold amount of restitution.

Counsel for Ministers

As ministers, we may at times be called upon to counsel with individuals who have questions regarding certain types of restitution—for example, confessions that would implicate or bring injury to others. It is prudent to remember that we do not give legal advice. Our role is spiritual in nature, focusing on the individual's moral obligation toward God and those they have injured, and prayerfully offering counsel regarding ways reparation could best be accomplished.

In the case of criminal acts, the obligation upon the individual is to confess his part of the crime regardless of the penalty that could result. This is what God requires. However, in some instances it may be impossible to confess wrongdoing without incriminating others as well. In situations of this nature, it may be best to suggest the person obtains legal counsel as a preliminary step to confession.

In the case of adultery, attempts to make amends must be approached prayerfully. The circumstances and personalities involved will influence how such a matter should be made right. You may wish to consult with a senior pastor when faced with a situation of this nature.

Worship

The importance of worship is a theme woven throughout Scripture.[1] True worship is God-centered, and is the response of the believer's heart to God's worth or worthiness. It is the act of adoring, exalting, honoring, and thanking Him, and may occur in various forms including prayer, sacrifice, service, meditation, Bible reading, and song. As an interaction between God and His people, it can and should take place both privately and corporately, and both inwardly and outwardly. It is at the heart of the believer's relationship with God, both as individuals and as a community of saints.

Accounts of worship begin in the first chapters of Genesis, and a number of precepts related to worship are established in Old Testament narratives. A proper approach to God is necessary, for we read that "the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect" (Genesis 4:4-5). It is evident that God is holy and jealous regarding His honor, as the first commandment of the Mosaic Law enjoined the Children of Israel, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:2-3). God prohibited His people from imitating pagan ways of worship; the Israelites were commanded to eradicate corrupt worship from their midst, and to "utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods" (Deuteronomy 12:2).

Worship in both the Old and New Testaments involved going to a specific place to meet God. The Israelites were instructed: "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8). Old Testament worship centered for the most part around the Tabernacle and subsequent Temple, where God symbolically dwelt among His people. The Psalmist rejoiced in his privilege to go to God's house, saying, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psalm 122:1). In the New Testament, the followers of Christ were "continually in the temple, praising and blessing God" (Luke 24:53).[2]

The worship of God involved sacrifice.[3] Deuteronomy 12:11-12 states, "There shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the Lord: and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that is within your gates."

Old Testament worship was never intended to be an end in itself, but was an expression of trust and dependence upon the God of Israel. In the New Testament dispensation, believers can know their God in a way impossible to Old Testament Jews, for the fathomless depths of God's love for mankind was revealed in the person of Christ Jesus. Worship now centers on the sacrifice He made for the redemption of mankind. Believers of this era worship God as both just and the Justifier, trusting in His love and forgiveness as well as knowing Him on a personal level.

While Christ's followers need to draw near Him individually in personal devotion, meditation, and prayer, they also need to draw near to Him by meeting with Him in the fellowship of His people, where God promises to be especially present (see Matthew 18:20). God's Word teaches that as members of Christ's body, believers are connected in a living and vital way.[4] It is in the public worship of the church that Christians are primarily identified as the people of God. The writer of Hebrews warned members of the Early Church not to forsake "the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

There is a true and a false in religious worship; instances are recorded in Scripture of both. God's prophets took a firm stand against the false and emphatically warned of its danger.[5] True worship is not only directed to God, but is inspired and directed by the pure, holy, and perfect Spirit of God. God's Spirit does not lead to confusion or disorder, so a form of worship that glorifies the flesh or anything other than God, that is not decent and orderly, is contrary to God's Word.[6]

Throughout Scripture, Spirit-inspired individuals penned exhortations as to how true worship should occur. The Psalmist wrote, "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name" (Psalm 100:4). Paul admonished the believers at Philippi, to "worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:3). He told the believers at Ephesus, "Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:18-19). The writer of Hebrews spoke of serving God "acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews 12:28) and exhorted those who read His epistle to "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually" (Hebrews 13:15). Jesus himself taught that true worshippers would approach Him "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

One of the greatest privileges Christians have is to worship God. Whether that worship occurs corporately in a Christian assembly or individually in the privacy of personal devotions, care must be taken never to allow the act of worship to become commonplace, for entrance into the presence of the most important Being in the universe must be done with sincerity, reverence, and humility.

[1] In the Old Testament, the word most often translated *worship* is *shachah*, which means "to prostrate oneself, especially in homage to royalty or God; to bow down." Many other words are used to describe the actions of worshiping the Lord. The New Testament Greek word most often translated *worship* is *proskuneo,* and it also means "to pay homage by bowing down." Other words translated *worship* in the New Testament are *sebazomai*, meaning "to render religious honor" (see Romans 1:25) and *sebomai* meaning "to revere or adore" (see Acts 16:14).

[2] See also Psalm 55:14, Luke 4:16, and Acts 2:46.

[3] It is noteworthy that when the Israelites offered a sacrifice, it had to be perfect. If it had any blemish, it was not acceptable to the priest or to God. The worship we offer God must come from a heart that is pure; otherwise it is not acceptable. The high priest could only examine the animal externally to determine whether or not it was perfect, but our High Priest knows the thoughts and the intents of our hearts, and what motivates the words we say, the thoughts we think, and the deeds we do.

[4] 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:24

[5] Leviticus 26:1; Deuteronomy 11:16; Isaiah 1:10-17; Micah 5:13; 1 Corinthians 10:14; and 1 Timothy 4:1 are just a few of the Scriptural warnings against false worship.

[6] See 1 Corinthians 14:26, 40

Counsel to Ministers:

It is important to bear in mind Paul's admonition that worship should be conducted in a decent and orderly manner (see 1 Corinthians 14:40). It is our responsibility to make sure that no part of the service itself, or the altar service that follows, detracts from bringing glory to God. We should not allow anything that brings confusion or disorder, draws undue attention to an individual, or tends to fanaticism. We do not want to discourage the real manifestations of the Spirit of God, but we know that He brings a sense of reverence and holiness when He is in control.

The Lord's Day

The term "Lord's Day" denotes a day set apart for the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ.[1] Since the first century, Christians around the world have marked Sunday, the first day of the week, as their day to rest and to honor the Lord.

The principle of setting aside one day of the week to rest from labor is as old as Creation. The seventh day following God's six days of creative work was the first instance where one day out of the week was set apart as a day of rest.[2]

God's rest on the seventh day foreshadowed the Sabbath law that would later be given to the Children of Israel. However, there is no biblical record of the Sabbath before Israel left Egypt, nor any indication that Sabbath-keeping was practiced from Adam to Moses.

The Word of God makes it clear that Sabbath observance was a special sign between God and Israel; under the Mosaic Law, God gave specific rules to the Children of Israel concerning their Sabbath.[3] The word *Sabbath* comes from the Hebrew words *shabbath,* which means "an intermission," and *shabath,* meaning "to repose; to desist from exertion." Sabbath observance reminded the Jewish people of two important events in their history: God's creation of the world and His subsequent rest (Exodus 20:11), and God's deliverance of their nation from slavery in Egypt (Deuteronomy 5:15).[4] The spiritual significance of the Old Testament Sabbath was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who gives spiritual rest to His followers,[5] and delivers from the bondage of sin those who turn to Him in repentance and faith.[6]

The establishment of the first day of the week as a day of worship is foreshadowed in the Old Testament. The original offerings of first fruits were brought to God on the first day of the week, on "the morrow after the Sabbath" (see Leviticus 23:9-12). Paul explained the spiritual significance of this offering, stating that Christ is the first fruits of the resurrection of the just (see 1 Corinthians 15:20,23). Since Christ arose from the dead "on the morrow after the sabbath," the first day of the week became a memorial to the Resurrection of Christ from the very beginning of the Christian dispensation.

Some teach that Christians should keep the Jewish Sabbath as their day of worship. However, the Word of God makes it clear that the specific requirements of the Law passed away when Jesus ushered in the New Covenant, which is the Christian dispensation. Believers after the time of Christ were no longer under the bondage of the Law.[7] When Jesus arose from the grave on the first day of the week, the Law was fulfilled,[8] and a new era began.

The Gospel emphasis that the Resurrection occurred upon the "first day of the week" highlights that day's distinctiveness.[9] The victory Christ obtained over death, Hell, and the grave made that day sacred to the Christian Church. After Christ's resurrection, whenever He appeared in His resurrected form and the day is mentioned, it is always the first day of the week.[10] The Holy Spirit fell on the 120 assembled in the Upper Room on the first day of the week, putting still another seal upon it as the appropriate day to be set aside for the worship of God. Scriptures such as Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:2 indicate that the first day of the week was when the disciples and other believers assembled, observed the Lord's Supper, brought their offerings to the Lord, and otherwise worshipped Him.

By contrast with the frequent mention of the Lord's Day, the only time the Sabbath is mentioned from Acts through Revelation is in relation to evangelistic efforts among the Jews, and the setting is usually in a synagogue (Acts chapters 13-18) where Paul went—not to fellowship with and edify the saints, but to evangelize. Once Paul announced that "from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles" (Acts 18:6), the Sabbath is never again mentioned.

It is important for believers in this Christian dispensation to regard the Lord's Day with holy reverence. God instructed the Children of Israel, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8). While the spe-

cific requirements of the Sabbath Day have been removed by Jesus, many benefits will be received by those who honor the principle of setting apart the Lord's Day.

The church cannot dictate personal holiness, nor should it create a set of legalistic requirements or restrictions for observing the Lord's Day. However, it is appropriate for the church to call believers to a holy reverence for this special day. It is right for Christians to sacrifice time to allow time for God. It is beneficial for them to give undistracted focus to the Heavenly Father. It is a blessing for followers of Christ to set aside regular times for thanksgiving and worship. And it is fitting to use the Lord's Day as a special time to reflect upon God's love and His ways.

From the physical perspective, the importance of using one day in seven to rest from daily labors is obvious. From the spiritual standpoint, the children of God find that as they set aside worldly concerns and take full advantage of the Lord's Day to wait upon God in prayer, to delight in His Word, and to fellowship with other Christians, they will reap His promised blessings.

[1] The expression "Lord's Day" occurs only once in the Bible, in Revelation 1:10, where the Apostle John is clearly dating his vision. The form of his expression marks a distinction between the prophetic "Day of the Lord" and the first day of the week, on which Christ arose.

[2] Genesis 2:2-3

[3] See Exodus 20:8-11; 31:12-17.

[4] The Sabbath Day, our Saturday, is still observed by orthodox Jews as their day of rest.

[5] Matthew 11:28-29; Hebrews 4:1-11

[6] Romans 8:21

[7] Paul asked the Galatians why they were still following the old Law (Galatians 3:19), and chastised them for turning again "to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage," noting that they were observing Levitical "days, and months, and times, and years" (Galatians 4:9-10).

[8] The principles upon which the Ten Commandments were based were not discarded under the new dispensation. In fact, these principles are amplified in the New Testament, bringing even the thoughts and intents of the heart into consideration. The Sabbath commandment is the only one of the Ten Commandments that is not mentioned as binding upon Christians. Jesus himself showed the religious leaders of that day that they did not rightly understand the intended use of the Sabbath, on one occasion telling them, "The Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day" (Matthew 12:8). By that statement, He asserted His right to interpret the Mosaic commandments in light of their spiritual application, rather than their literal application.

[9] Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1

[10] See Matthew 28:1,9,10; Mark 16:9; Luke 24:1,13,15; and John 20:19, 26.

Counsel for Ministers:

Over the years, attitudes toward observing the Lord's Day as a day set apart to honor God have deteriorated significantly in society. A deliberate choice on our part is required in choosing to make Sunday a day consecrated to worship the Lord. We do not condone shopping, doing home and car maintenance, and

participating in sports or other activities that desecrate the Lord's Day. Rather than determining what would be *wrong* to do on the Lord's Day, it can be helpful to decide on the basis of what is *right* for the Lord's Day, making sure that the choices align with the concept of keeping an undistracted focus upon God.

There may be those in your congregation whose employment obligations require them to work on Sundays. While not an ideal situation, we must understand that at times it may be necessary.

Though setting aside Sunday as a day of rest may not include physical relaxation, we have proven that it provides spiritual renewal.

Tithes and Offerings

The doctrine of tithing is a part of God's Word—an instruction from God himself instituted to provide for the maintenance and growth of His Church on earth. Tithing was practiced by the patriarchs, perpetuated in the Law of Moses, emphasized by the prophets, sanctioned and taught by Jesus, and followed as a practice by the early Apostolic Church.

The Hebrew word translated *tithe* in the Old Testament is *ma'aser* which means "a tenth part." In the New Testament, the Greek word translated *tithe* comes from the root *dekatoo* which means "to give or take a tenth." Thus, the paying of tithes is a returning of one-tenth of one's personal income to God.

The first recorded account of tithing in Scripture occurs in Genesis 14, when Abram paid tithes to Melchizedek, "the priest of the most High God" (Genesis 14:18), following a victorious battle. Genesis 28:20-22 provides another example of tithing in the account of Jacob's vow to God.

Nearly three hundred years later, when God instituted the Law for the Children of Israel, tithing was part of the divine instructions: the Israelites were instructed to give ten percent of all their increase from their fields and flocks.[1] In Leviticus 27:30,32, we read: "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord. And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord." The tithe was designated for a specific purpose: to support the work of God.[2]

The Prophet Malachi referenced the extreme importance of paying tithes by inquiring, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation" (Malachi 3:8-9). When this charge was brought against the Children of Israel, they were seemingly unaware that their failure to bring the tithe was what had brought blighted crops, physical affliction, and oppression by their enemies. Malachi went on to say, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10). When God's people obey His instructions, they find blessings far greater than they can imagine.

In the New Testament era, Jesus commended and supported the giving of tithes. He rebuked the Pharisees for not practicing judgment, mercy, and faith, although they were paying the tithe. He stated clearly, "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other [the paying of the tithe] undone" (Matthew 23:23). He inferred that tithing is expected of believers by including it in the list of commendable things which the selfrighteous Pharisee was doing to secure favor with God.[3] The Apostle Paul acknowledged and confirmed the practice by commenting on Abraham's payment of tithes to Melchisedec.[4]

The tithe is not the only method outlined in Scripture for the support of God's work; offerings given in addition to the tithe are also commanded in both the Old and New Testaments. The Lord told Moses, "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering" (Exodus 25:2). The Hebrew word *terumah,* translated *offering*, actually means a "freewill offering." Three times a year, the men of Israel were to come before the Lord and they were not to "appear before the Lord empty." Every man was required to "give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee" (Deuteronomy 16:16-17). The writer of Proverbs wrote, "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase" (Proverbs 3:9), and this specifically referred to the *minchah*, or gratitude offering, commanded under the Law.

The theme of freewill offering is restated in numerous places in the New Testament. In Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, He told the people, "When thou doest thine alms . . ." (Matthew 6:2), implying that they naturally would be giving alms. In Luke 11:41-42, He directly instructed, "Give alms of such things as ye have." This

was in addition to tithes, for He went on to say, "Ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs . . ."

Biblical giving clearly is more than offering one's surplus. In Luke 21:1-4, Jesus commended the widow who put all she had into the offering of the Lord. He stated that although the widow gave only two mites, she put in "more than they all" because she gave from her poverty, while the rich men present gave from their abundance.

Some principles for offering are found in Paul's letters to the church members in Corinth. In 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, when speaking about the needs of God's people in Jerusalem, Paul instructed the believers to set aside gifts "as God hath prospered him"—in other words, in keeping with their income. He instructed them to give generously from their hearts, each one deciding before God what amount to give (see 2 Corinthians 9:6-7). In 2 Corinthians 8:3, he encouraged generosity, admonishing the same group of believers to emulate the followers of Christ in Macedonia, who gave as much as they were able and beyond.

Above all, tithes and offerings should be given with pure motives and an attitude of worship to God and service to the body of Christ. Acts 2:44-47 tells us that the early Christians who gave of their substance to God enjoyed gladness, singleness of heart, and favor with all the people. Those blessings still accrue to those who follow God's Word in relation to tithes and offerings.

[1] Numbers 18:26; Deuteronomy 14:22; 2 Chronicles 31:5

[2] Numbers 18:21

[3] See Luke 18:12.

[4] Hebrews 7:1-2

Counsel for Ministers:

No method for receiving the tithes is prescribed in Scripture. In the Apostolic Faith churches, appropriate receptacles are placed on the wall of the church sanctuary, near the entrances, over which a small sign is placed reading "Tithes and Offerings." In the United States, receipts for tithes are given for income tax purposes. Collections are never taken in the services.

Distinction from the World

God desires for His followers to be clearly distinguished from unbelievers. Though Christians necessarily interact with non-Christians in their daily lives, they do not have to be affected by a non-Christian outlook. Christ himself said, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them [His followers] out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:15-16).[1]

In his second epistle to the Corinthians, Paul the Apostle penned an impassioned outcry against worldliness. He challenged the Early Church members to be distinct from the ungodly, exhorting them to "come out from among them" and be separate (see 2 Corinthians 6:17).[2] They were to insulate themselves against the mindset and philosophies of the world, refusing to follow the example of unbelievers in behavior, attitudes, appearance, and associations that were unbecoming to a follower of Christ.[3]

The principle of remaining distinct from the world is no less important today. There is an essential difference between the sanctified people of God and the people of the world, and it is important not to blur the distinction between the two. This choice to be separate from the subtle influences of the world is evidence of the believer's heartfelt commitment to the teachings of God's Word.

Jesus pointed out that the "fruit" of a person's life is what those looking on use to evaluate his spiritual condition (Matthew 7:17-20). If an individual consistently lives a clean, holy life before his peers, the reality of what God has done in his life will be an unmistakable witness to others.

Christ's followers are called to be distinct from the world in their beliefs and values. The morality of the world is often determined by whatever seems to be "right" to the individual for the case at hand. In contrast, God's Word sets forth principles and moral absolutes that are unchanging and universal, irrespective of circumstances, cultures, or eras in history. Followers of Christ reject standards defined by the world, upholding without compromise a Bible-based code of ethics, and evidencing a commitment to righteousness that is complete and undivided.

Paul warned the believers in Rome not to be "conformed" (or squeezed into the mold) of this world, but to be "transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2). That principle holds true today. Christians of every era must be alert to areas where worldly thinking presses in, and ask for God's help in withstanding those influences if we are to be the "living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" (Romans 12:1) that God demands.

Christ's followers are called to be distinct from the world in their conduct and actions. The Bible gives guidelines about what actions and behaviors are appropriate for Christians. For example, actions and behaviors should glorify God, (1 Corinthians 10:31), be holy in nature (1 Peter 1:15), be according to the will of God (Romans 12:2), not have any appearance of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22), not hinder another Christian (Romans 14:21), involve the right company (2 Corinthians 6:14), not compromise the individual's Christian testimony (Romans 12:9), and qualify to be done in Jesus' name (Colossians 3:17).

The Apostle Paul challenged the younger man, Timothy, to be an example to others "in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12). The Greek word translated *conversation* means "behavior," not verbal discourse. He gave a similar exhortation to the believers at Philippi, instructing them, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh [is worthy of] the gospel of Christ" (Philippians 1:27).

Decisions about recreation and entertainment are one area where distinction from the world will be apparent. As people who are set apart for God, believers reject options that would fuel the flesh instead of the spirit, recognizing that thoughts and actions are impacted by what is read, heard, and watched. The Psalmist evidenced his determination to separate himself from harmful influences, stating, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me" (Psalm 101:3).[4] He was determined not to look with indifference on the sins of those around him, nor to permit their sins to impact him. We are not to "have pleasure" or to be entertained by immorality (see Romans 1:28-32).

A follower of Christ will also be distinct from the world in how he chooses to spend his time. In Ephesians 5:15-16, the Bible says, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." The word translated *redeeming* in this verse carries the idea of "making the most of," and service to God lies behind the Apostle's thought. Christ's followers resist living self-centered lives, knowing that the precious opportunity of advancing Christ's kingdom must not be allowed to slip away, "because the days are evil."

Christ's followers are called to be distinct from the world in their appearance. The concept of modesty—a regard for decency and moderation in behavior, deportment, and dress—is a clear teaching of Scripture. The attire and demeanor of the people of God should reflect Christ and be appropriate for one who represents Him. Styles differ from culture to culture, and change with each generation, but the principles regarding godly appearance transcend time and societal trends.

One guideline for attire is given in 1 Timothy 2:9: "In like manner also, that women adorn [put in proper order, decorate, garnish] themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety [infers dignity and serious purpose as opposed to levity and frivolity]." Godly women are to dress and behave in such a way as to draw attention to the Spirit of God within them, rather than to the physical body. Extreme or ostentatious clothing, hairstyles, and general appearance are not appropriate for followers of Christ, and deportment should match the conservative, godly appearance.[5]

As Christ's followers purpose to follow Christ's admonition to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37), the distinction between themselves and the world will be clear.

[1] James 1:27 also teaches the importance of keeping oneself "unspotted from the world."

[2] The Apostle John reinforced the same principle in 1 John 2:15-16.

[3] See also Titus 2:12-14 and Ephesians 5:11.

[4] Other Scriptures that will help believers make godly choices regarding entertainment options include Proverbs 14:16; Isaiah 30:21 and Philippians 4:8.

[5] For a more comprehensive study regarding appearance and modesty in Christians, see the topic *Appearance/Modesty* in this manual.

Biblical Perspectives

The Sanctity of Marriage

Marriage is a sacred institution originated by God. According to Scripture, it is a covenant relationship which establishes a bond between a man and a woman that is dissolved only when death causes the inevitable separation.[1] God's design for marriage goes back to man's beginning. The first chapters of Genesis relate how God spoke the firmament into existence, and created water, dry land, vegetation, and every living creature. Then He created man. Although God deemed everything that He had made "very good," He proceeded to identify something that was *not* good: "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18). To address man's need for a suitable companion, God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam. Then He took one of Adam's ribs, and from it "made he a woman, and brought her unto the man" (Genesis 2:22).

It is significant that in Genesis 2:23, the woman made from Adam's rib was referred to as "woman." In verse 25, she is referred to as Adam's "wife." Something had happened—God had instituted marriage! God had made the two as one. And He immediately gave the first Scriptural directive regarding this union: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Thus, according to God's decree, the marriage union transcends even the bond between parent and child.

Scripture gives several guidelines regarding who a person should marry. First, it is clear that marriage is to be between a man and a woman. Woman was specifically created by God to be a "help meet for him [man]" (Genesis 2:18, 20). The literal meaning of this phrase is "a helper corresponding to man"—one who was equal and adequate for him. She was perfectly and uniquely formed to complement man physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Although marriage, both Scripturally and traditionally, has been defined as the union of a man and woman as husband and wife, some are trying to revise that definition to say that marriage is the legal union of two *individuals*, irrespective of gender. However, the Bible is clear that a physical relationship between two men or two women is an abomination. Leviticus 18:22 says, "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination." Society may look at such a relationship as an "alternative lifestyle" or simply a matter of choice, but same-sex relationships are clearly condemned by God.[2]

Another basic guideline regarding the choice of a marriage partner is found in 2 Corinthians 6:14, which reads, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" Those who are saved need to seek another believer as a marriage companion. That person needs to be more than just religious; the two need to be one in faith and doctrine.

Utmost care must be taken in choosing a marriage partner, for God's Word teaches that marriage is to be an exclusive relationship—a lifelong, faithful union with one's spouse. Mark 10:9 reads, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." While the law of the land may allow for the dissolution of a marriage, in God's eyes that marriage exists until one of the marriage partners dies.

Divorce was never part of God's plan. The Prophet Malachi rebuked Jewish men for divorcing their wives, warning them "let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth," and then continuing, "For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away [divorce]" (Malachi 2:15-16).

Under the Law of Moses, divorce was tolerated under certain conditions because of the hardness of the

hearts of the people. When the Pharisees of Jesus' day questioned Him about this, He responded, "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so" (Matthew 19:8). Jesus was restating that the divine intention for the holy covenant of marriage did not include divorce.

Jesus did give one exception to the no-divorce intention of God, and this exception is recorded in Matthew 19:9. "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." Some point to the phrase, "except it be for fornication," and claim that the "innocent party" is allowed to divorce and remarry, since that individual's spouse was unfaithful.

To properly apply this passage, it is necessary to examine the context and the meaning of the word *fornication*. Fornication is committed by a person who is not married. If a married individual has a sexual relationship with a person other than his or her spouse, that one is committing adultery, not fornication. This verse refers to the Jewish law concerning the vow of espousal. Under that law, the espousal was as binding as the marriage vow. The couple met to make the espousal agreement, but once the arrangement had been made, the two individuals did not come together for about a year, allowing each of them time to prepare for the marriage. When that period was up, they came together and the marriage was consummated. If, during that espousal period, one broke the agreement by having a sexual union with another person, that was fornication. Under Jewish law, that was grounds for the marriage agreement to be dissolved.

Joseph is an example of this. In Matthew 1:18-19, we read, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily." Joseph knew he had not had physical relations with Mary, and yet she was found to be with child. All the evidence seemed to indicate that she had been unfaithful, but the angel of the Lord came and reassured him. Otherwise, he could have obtained a bill of divorcement and put her away because, in a normal situation, this would have been proof of an act of fornication.

There may be times, even in a marriage between believers, when one of the individuals in the marriage backslides. This does not mean the saved individual should separate from the spouse who is not saved. Rather, the Bible says, "If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him" (1 Corinthians 7:12-13).

Paul goes on to say, "If the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" (1 Corinthians 7:15-16).[3] The faithfulness of a Christian spouse could cause the one who departed to turn back to God.

At times, a Christian's marriage may end in divorce, in spite of his or her attempts to avoid that outcome. However, even when a believer has been abandoned and divorced by an unfaithful spouse, Scripture makes no allowance for remarriage while the first companion lives. There is still potential for the departed spouse to repent and desire to return to the marriage vow that was made before God, but if the believing spouse remarries, that restoration would not be possible. God blesses and strengthens the one who purposes to live according to His instructions, and helps him or her to continue to live a victorious life as a divorcee.

God's Word makes it plain: divorce and remarriage constitutes adultery. Paul the Apostle wrote in 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, "And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord. 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."

Romans 7:2-3 reinforces the prohibition against remarriage while the companion lives: "For the woman

which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress." In Luke 16:18, we find the same instruction given concerning the man. "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery." Both the man who separated from his wife and married someone else, and the man who married the wife of another man are guilty of adultery.

It is important to understand that the instruction regarding the lifetime nature of the covenant of marriage relates only to marriages that are right in the sight of God—one where neither the man nor the woman has a living companion from a prior marriage that was right in the sight of God. A union that is wrong in the eyes of God, even though legal according to the laws of land, is not right when measured by Scripture, and the participants in the relationship are living in a state of adultery.

In the time of Ezra, God commanded the Children of Israel to rectify their participation in wrongful marriages, instructing them, "Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. Now therefore make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives" (Ezra 10:10-11). They were expected to separate despite the fact that they had children (Ezra 10:44).

[1] See Matthew 19:4-6 and Mark 10:5-9.

2 See Genesis 19:1-13; Leviticus 20:13; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9.

[3] Some teach that the phrase "not in bondage" means the individual is free to marry again. However, the Greek word *douloo,* translated *bondage* in this verse, is not the same word used in verse 39 where Paul says "The wife is bound [*deo*] by the law as long as her husband liveth." Paul was simply stating that if the unbelieving partner insisted on departing, the believing spouse would not come under any condemnation for the fact that the unbelieving spouse abandoned the marriage.

Counsel for Ministers

Perhaps one of the most difficult situations we face as ministers is counseling with a couple who are married in violation of the laws of God. We will need much God-given wisdom in such cases. The goal will be to make clear the instruction of Scripture in a manner that will not drive the couple away from God. New pastors may wish to consult with a senior pastor or district superintendent regarding how best to handle situations of this nature.

A minister should not dictate what any individual or couple must do, whether they are contemplating marriage, some type of conflict within the marriage, or a separation of the marriage. The best course of action is merely to show those involved the Word of God related to the matter, and then counsel them to go to God in prayer for His direction. That precludes either or both of the parties involved from later blaming the minister for the outcome, and he has discharged his responsibility toward them and God in the matter. It is not a minister's responsibility to force people to do the right thing, but to show them the right way and encourage them to follow God's Word.

We may be asked if a Christian should ever initiate divorce proceedings. In Matthew 5:32, Jesus said that one who put away his wife "causeth her to commit adultery." Based upon that, we would recommend a legal separation instead. That does not fracture the marriage vow, which was taken before God, but would provide the necessary protection.

Those who use the argument that have a right to remarry because they married before they became Christians, or divorced before they became Christians, are incorrect. God's commands are for all people. John the Baptist lost his head because he condemned Herod's marriage to his brother's wife. Though the king was not a Jew or a Christian, he was still held accountable to God's laws.

The Sanctity of Life

Human life is sacred. According to God's Word, every human life, from conception through death, is to be valued, respected, nurtured, and protected.

God created life; the first man was created "in His own image, in the image of God created he him" (Genesis 1:27).[1] As beautiful, colorful, and full of variety as the plant and animal kingdoms are, mankind alone bears the image of God. Not only Adam and Eve, but every person born into this world since then has been personally created by God himself.[2]

God protects human life,[3] and values it.[4] The writer of Psalm 8 asked, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Psalm 8:3-5). By comparison with the grandeur of the heavens, the Psalmist felt that man was wholly unworthy of God's attention. Yet God made man "a little lower than the angels," the crown of His creation! In God's estimation, the life of man is so precious and so unique that He commands that it must be preserved and protected. He decrees that it is not to be treated violently by other human beings, and ordains eternal punishment for those who do so.[5]

God has sovereign power over life. As both the Creator and Sustainer of Life, He alone has the power and the authority to determine its beginning and ending.[6]

The source of disregard for the sanctity of life is Satan himself. Satan's goal is to steal, kill, and destroy those made in the image of God (see John 10:10). Since respect for human life is based upon acknowledging God as imparter of life, any nation or individual who abandons God will also abandon respect for His creation and will dismiss the innate value of each human being created in His image.

Scripture warns that in the last days "perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves,… without natural affection,…fierce" (2 Timothy 3:1-3) The word *perilous* is eloquent: the original Greek term could be rendered "painful, tragic, or grievous." The escalating number of abortions performed annually, the widespread promotion of embryonic stem cell research, the determination to legalize and legitimatize euthanasia, the increasing acceptance of assisted suicides and other ungodly, life-threatening procedures are clear evidence that we live in perilous times. While God's Word does not specifically address these practices, there are numerous principles taught in Scripture that make God's view abundantly clear.

Abortion: The practice of abortion is an evil that has claimed the lives of millions of innocent babies. Scripture teaches that life begins at conception and continues to develop in the womb where God himself superintends the development and maturation of the fetus. In Psalm 139:13-16, David speaks of God's active role in the creation and formation of a child in the womb, relating that "thou hast covered me in my mother's womb."[7] The patriarch Job acknowledged his Creator when he stated, "Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about" (Job 10:8). God himself declared to the prophet Isaiah, "Thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb . . ." (Isaiah 44:2). Clearly, the Bible gives theological certainty to this truth that is widely challenged in our world today.

God has a definite plan and purpose for each individual. Jeremiah 1:5 records that God knew the prophet and had a plan for him even before He formed him in the womb.[8] Both Jesus and John the Baptist were recognized as male children, not merely an appendage to their mothers' bodies, well before their respective births.

In Exodus 21:22, God ordained that one who caused the death of a baby in the womb would be subject to death, the same as a person who committed murder. This clearly indicates that God considers a baby in the womb to be as human as a full-grown adult. While the argument is often made that women should have the "right to choose" an abortion, Scripture makes clear that pregnant women have no right to take the life of an unborn child.[9]

Embryonic Stem Cell Research: Embryonic stem cells are taken from human embryos, and in order to harvest them, an embryo must be destroyed.[10] Embryologists agree that from the moment of conception, all forty-six chromosomes and a fully functioning, unique genetic code are present. Size and location do not determine humanity. Because research on embryonic stem cells requires the destruction of a living human being, no projected benefit to society or to medical research can justify it.

Euthanasia and Suicide: Physical death is inevitable; the Psalmist acknowledged that life is brief, and asked, "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?" (Psalm 89:48; see also Hebrews 9:28). However, the sovereign God and Creator alone has the authority to decide when and how a person's death will occur. Job recognized that fact, stating in Job 30:23, "I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living." King Solomon declared, "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death" (Ecclesiastes 8:8). God is to have the final say over death, so euthanasia and suicide are man's way of trying to usurp that authority from God.[11]

Sometimes God allows a person to suffer for a period of time before death occurs. No one enjoys suffering, but that does not make it right to determine that a person should die. Often God's purposes are made known through a person's suffering. Romans 5:3 teaches that tribulations bring about perseverance. God has a purpose for life clear to the end. Only God knows what is best, and His timing, even in the matter of one's death, is perfect.

[1] See also Colossians 1:16.

[2] See Malachi 2:10.

[3] Exodus 20:13; Job 10:12; Psalm 91:11

[4] Isaiah 49:16, Jeremiah 31:3; Matthew 10:29-31

[5] See Exodus 21:20-22; Galatians 5:21; Revelation 21:8. Note that God's Word does give precedents for death sentences for capital crimes, and allows for the exercise of self-defense and warfare (see Genesis 9:6; Exodus 22:2; Numbers 35:12; Romans 13:4-5).

[6] Job 10:12; 1 Samuel 2:6; Acts 17:25

[7] The word translated *covered* has the sense of something that is interwoven or knit together. The implication is that God had put the parts of the body together as one who weaves cloth.

[8] The word *knew* signifies more than acquaintance; it indicates approval and even selection.

[9] A threat to the mother's life may be offered as justification for an abortion. In such cases, historic Christian faith has favored the life of the mother over that of an unborn child. However, in this era of advanced prenatal care, occasions when an abortion is deemed necessary to preserve the life of the mother are exceedingly rare. If Christians are faced with such a situation, the decision must be made with earnest prayer, and only in consideration of saving a life rather than taking a life.

[10] In contrast, research on adult stem cells does not require taking a life.

[11] See also 1 Corinthians 15:26, 54-56; Hebrews 2:9, 14-15; Revelation 21:4.

Counsel to Ministers

Some women who have undergone an abortion may have done so with little or no understanding of the impact that decision would have on their spiritual, emotional, and mental health. They may even have been unaware that it was a sin against God, and now feel their offense is unforgiveable. We must compassionately deal with those who suffer remorse for having had an abortion, reminding them that Jesus promises, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

If a seriously ill or injured person is being kept alive only by machines, it is not wrong for family members to make the decision to turn off the machines and allow the person to die, although making a decision like this can be very difficult and painful. Should God desire to keep a person alive, He is perfectly capable of doing so without the help of feeding tubes and/or machines. We should never seek to prematurely end a life, but at the same time, we do not have to go to extraordinary means to preserve a life.

Human Sexuality

God's plan for human sexuality is chastity for those outside a monogamous, heterosexual marriage, with faithfulness maintained by those who are in such a union. The Bible makes it very clear that homosexuality, as well as non-Biblical heterosexual activity, is sinful and will reap the judgment of God.

In spite of the clear teaching of God's Word, today's society shows a growing acceptance of sexual promiscuity and even support of deviant sexual identity and behavior. Thus, it is important that the followers of Christ correctly understand and articulate the truth on these contemporary issues. Paul warned Timothy that the time would come when people would reject sound doctrine and because of their own lusts, would turn to teachers who seek only to please their hearers (see 2 Timothy 4:3-4).[1] Increasing political and religious advocacy for acceptance of perverted sexual activities makes it clear that we live in the time Paul spoke about.

While homosexuality is often defined in the world's culture as a lifestyle choice, or merely an emotional or physiological inclination, the Bible clearly indicates that homosexual activity is a sin. Both the Old and New Testaments deem it as wickedness and pointedly prohibit it.[2] Because of the homosexual practices of the city of Sodom, God destroyed both Sodom and the neighboring city of Gomorrah (see Genesis 19:1-13, 24-25).[3]

Romans 1:26-27 teaches that homosexuality is a result of denying and disobeying God. Though society seeks to defend and legitimize homosexual activities, this behavior defiles God's design for sexual union to take place between a man and a woman within the framework of marriage. At the time of Creation, God did not remedy Adam's aloneness by giving him another man; He made a woman. Genesis 2:18 relates that the woman was specifically designed to be a "help meet for him [man]." The literal meaning of this phrase is "a helper corresponding to man"—one who is perfectly and uniquely formed to complement man physically, mentally, and spiritually. Behavior that rejects God's plan and design is despicable to God and condemned by Him.

The Bible tells us that people become homosexuals because of sin (see Romans 1:24-27) and ultimately as a result of their own choice. A person may be born with a greater susceptibility to homosexuality, just as some individuals seemingly are born with a tendency to violence and other sins. That does not excuse the person's choice to yield to sinful desires and behaviors.

Paul the Apostle told believers in Corinth that fornicators, idolaters, adulterers and the effeminate [homosexual offenders] would not inherit the kingdom of God (see 1 Corinthians 6:9). All sin is offensive to God, but Scripture is clear that God's forgiveness is just as available to a homosexual as it is to an adulterer, idol worshipper, murderer, thief, etc. God also promises the strength for victory over sin, including the sin of homosexuality, to all those who will believe in Jesus Christ for their salvation.[4]

[1] The phrase translated *turn away* in verse 4 conveys the sense of deliberate action in the original Greek. Those who do so *shall be turned* unto fables; this phrase is a medical term meaning "to twist out of place."

[2] See Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Judges 19:22-23; Romans 1:24-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:9-10

[3] Both Peter and Jude used these cities as an example of those who suffer eternal punishment for their sins. See 2 Peter 2:6 and Jude verse 7.

[4] 1 Corinthians 6:11; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Philippians 4:13

Gambling

Gambling is an activity which is gaining widespread acceptance in today's society. However, legalization of gambling by the government cannot be a criterion for evaluation. It is important for Christians to look at Scriptural principles which have a bearing on this topic. These include the following.

Financial stewardship: The parable of the talents related in Matthew 25:14-30, as well as many other Scriptures, make it clear that Christians have a responsibility to be good stewards of the resources God has entrusted them with. Money devoted to gambling is money that is not being used for the well-being of one's family or the advancement of a worthy cause. Statistics indicate that gambling leads to a much higher rate of debt and bankruptcy. Even more importantly, money spent in this manner contributes to a predatory and exploitative industry.

Greed or covetousness: The Bible clearly teaches the dangers of covetousness and focusing on material gain. For example, Proverbs 15:27 says, "He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house," and the truth of that verse is clearly illustrated by the devastating toll that gambling has taken on many households in our society. Gambling is based on a desire to "get rich quick," and can become addictive. Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 6:9, "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts [strong desire], which drown men in destruction and perdition." What could be a clearer description of the devastating impact of gambling?

Work ethic: The value of industry and the dangers of slothfulness are clear teachings of Scripture. Man's labors are to provide for his own physical needs and that of his family,[1] and provide him with resources to help others.[2] In contrast, gambling is built upon the concept of wanting something for nothing, and thus undermines the principles of hard work and diligence.

Self-control: Gambling has a tendency to become habit-forming or addictive, and this condition is contrary to Scripture. The Word of God teaches that believers will refuse to be brought under the power even of lawful things (1 Corinthians 6:12), but will evidence temperance or self-control in all activities of life.

Love of neighbor: Jesus taught, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Mark 12:31), but gain derived from gambling is based upon the losses of others. And those losses may go far beyond the financial realm. Families who suffer the impact of a gambling addiction are statistically at much greater risk for divorce, domestic violence, crime, and suicide.

Trust and contentment: God's Word teaches believers to depend upon God as their Provider, and to be satisfied with the resources He gives.[3] Gambling encourages covetousness, and denotes a lack of trust in God and dissatisfaction with His provision.

Christ's followers are to "do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31), and that certainly precludes gambling. The Bible also admonishes, "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22). Gambling is clearly a practice which violates the principles of God's Word, so those who want to live according to Scripture will refrain from participation in any form of this activity.

[1] See 2 Thessalonians 3:10 and 1 Timothy 5:8.

[2] Ephesians 4:28

[3] Hebrews 13:5

Counsel for Ministers:

Some will take the position that gambling is simply an activity like many other activities that involve risk, such as business ventures or investments. However, these are not comparable. Gambling is an activity in which wealth changes hands on the basis of chance, with no relationship to creative effort, useful skills, or responsible investment.

Pornography

Pornography is rampant today, due to its instant availability via books, magazines, videos, movie theaters, electronic devices, cable television, and the internet. Its destructive impact threatens marriages and families across the whole spectrum of society.

The word itself is a compound of two Greek words: *porne*, meaning "harlot,"[1] and *graphein*, meaning "to write." Thus, pornography could literally be termed "the writing of harlots." The word *porne* is used several times in the Bible, including in 1 Corinthians 6:15-20, where the Apostle Paul unequivocally states that Christians are to have no part in sexual sin.

Sexual sin includes pornography, because pornography attacks the dignity of men and women who were created in the image of God. It corrupts God's plan for sex, which is to be shared only within the man-woman marital relationship ordained by God. And it promotes obscenity and other deviant behaviors which are condemned by God's Word.

The principle of refusing to look (view/read) at what is impure is clearly taught in Scripture. In Psalm 101:3, the Psalmist declared, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes." The Bible gives many examples of men being enticed into immoral behavior by sight.[2] Even if no overt act is committed with the person pictured or described in pornographic materials, Jesus warned His disciples that "whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:28).

Pornography is either the result of sexually immoral thoughts or it leads to such thoughts. In either case, this is a violation of the injunction for believers to think about things that are honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report (see Philippians 4:8). And behavioral research has established that there is a clear link between the use of pornography and subsequent sinful behavior. James warned about this, stating, "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:14-15).[3] Individuals cannot put evil images, ideas, and suggestions into their minds and not exhibit some evidence of that input—the impression will produce the expression.[4] In addition, Scripture specifically denounces the sins that often result from the use of pornography, such as indecent exposure (Genesis 9:21-23), adultery (Luke 16:18; Romans 7:2-3), homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:24-27), incest (Leviticus 18:6-18), and prostitution (Deuteronomy 23:17-18).

Research indicates that pornography is addictive, just as drugs, alcohol, and gambling are addictive. Jesus said, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34), and sexual sin will rapidly dominate a person. A person is a slave to whatever controls him,[5] and if a person refuses to follow God's commandments, he will follow his own sinful desires and become enslaved to what his body wants.

The solution for Christians who live in a world defiled by pornography and other sexual sins is found in Galatians 5:16, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

[1] *Porne* is also translated *fornication* in some instances in the King James Version; examples include Matthew 5:32; John 8:41; Romans 1:29, etc.

[2] Shechem (Genesis 34:2), Judah (Genesis 38:2-3) and David (2 Samuel 11:2-5) are all illustrations of this point.

[3] The word *epithumia*, translated *lust* in this verse, means "strong desire" or "longing" and can have a neu-

tral connotation, being neither good nor bad. It refers to an individual's natural appetites, which include a desire for food, knowledge, interest in the opposite sex, etc. Thus, this verse points out that Satan appeals to man's natural desires, the same as he did to Eve in the Garden of Eden. If Satan can induce a person to give him control of those natural appetites, he has succeeded in causing that individual to choose a path of sin and ultimate destruction. This emphasizes an individual's personal involvement and responsibility for sins committed.

[4] In Luke 6:45, Jesus himself expressed the principle that what is in the mind and heart will evidence itself in action.

[5] See 2 Peter 2:19.

Counsel for Ministers:

Research shows that a huge percentage of men in our society are addicted to pornography, and many more have dabbled in it. It may be advisable to offer strategies to young men you are working with (such as in pre-marriage counseling sessions) regarding how to protect themselves from temptation, preserve the sanctity of their marriages, and maintain their walk with God. Practical suggestions would include the following.

- Install porn filtering software on your computer. This will protect you from stumbling onto pornography by accident.
- Use filtered search engines or reputable directories to locate the online information you need.
- Limit viewing to respectable sites. Do not go to entertainment sites or other areas that would likely feature sexually provocative content or images.
- Never click on website addresses or open attachments that you receive in an unsolicited email.
- If you subscribe to cable TV, block channels that offer questionable material. You do not want to view indecent images when flipping through channels.

Use of Alcohol, Tobacco, or Controlled Substances

God has called His people to holiness and distinction from an ungodly world, so believers must abstain from anything that would defile or contaminate their bodies. The Apostle Paul warned the believers at Corinth, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy" (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). These verses alone offer sufficient reason for abstinence from substances that could harm the body or destroy one's testimony, such as alcohol, tobacco, and non-prescription, mood-altering drugs.

Paul went on to point out that believers were "bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:20), and thus their bodies were not their own but belonged to Christ. He concludes his statement with the imperative, "Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." The followers of Christ must be faithful in their care of what has been entrusted to them by God, including their physical bodies.

While the unsaved may feel they have the freedom to do whatever they want with their own bodies, the fact is that even occasional use of addictive substances often leads to destructive habits. Evidence is found in the fact that many in the world today are enslaved by their own desires. That is clearly contrary to the will of God for His followers.

Alcohol:

Alcoholism is a problem of staggering proportions in much of the world today, and it has destroyed countless lives. The Bible unquestionably condemns drunkenness,[1] but many today propose that social drinking, or drinking in moderation, is acceptable. A careful study of God's Word reveals the error of that position.

In Old Testament times, complete abstinence was a requirement for the spiritual leaders of Israel.[2] Under the New Testament dispensation, all believers are priests unto God (see 1 Peter 2:9), and thus the standard of total abstinence applies to them.

Proverbs 23:29-32 gives a vivid portrayal of the effects of alcohol, warning that "at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." Research has shown that even in small amounts, alcohol takes a toll on mental and physical reactions. Rulers in Old Testament times were warned to abstain from alcohol, "lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the judgment" (Proverbs 31:5). In another place we read, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1). Obviously, God's people should refrain from anything that distorts judgment or that mocks and destroys one's dignity.

Consumption of alcohol violates several of the basic principles laid down for the followers of Christ. Among these is the requirement for believers to be an example to those around them. Even if a person were capable of drinking in moderation, his action could embolden another who might not have the same degree of restraint. Romans 14:21 indicates that "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."

The use of alcohol can be addictive in nature, and any type of addiction (the state of being physiologically or psychologically dependent on a habit-forming substance) is contrary to Scripture. Christians are warned not to be controlled or enslaved by any substance; they are not to be "brought under the power" of anything (see 1 Corinthians 6:12), but to live lives of temperance and self-control.

Tobacco:

The use of tobacco is potentially devastating to the physical body. Medical research has proved beyond doubt that it impacts every organ. In spite of mandatory warnings on its packaging and the fact that even inhaling second-hand smoke endangers the body, tobacco usage is currently the leading preventable cause of death in the United States and continues to create widespread health issues around the world. Since a Christian belongs to God, anything that defiles or damages his or her body is wrong.

Like the use of alcohol, the use of tobacco can be addictive, and the Bible is clear that any type of addictive behavior is not to be part of a Christian's life. The leaves of the tobacco plant contain nicotine, along with several other toxic substances, and this is the main factor responsible for the dependence-forming properties of tobacco smoking. The characteristics of tobacco addiction are similar to those of addiction to drugs such as heroin and cocaine.

Cigarette smokers and non-smokers alike agree that tobacco is a dirty habit; it is accompanied by a strong smell on the breath and clothing of a user, stains the teeth and hands, and leaves behind a hard-to-remove residue on walls and other surfaces. God condemns the unclean, and commands the Christian not to contaminate himself with anything that is defiling, warning, "touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Corinthians 6:17).

Perhaps one of the greatest evidences that God expects His followers to abstain from tobacco usage is the countless testimonies of those who have been delivered from this addictive habit in a moment of time when they surrendered their lives to God and were born again. Individuals who had been bound for years by tobacco have been freed instantly from its power and never felt any desire for it again.[3]

Controlled Substances:

[The comments in this section refer specifically to hallucinogens or other mood-altering drugs, not those prescribed for medicinal or pharmaceutical purposes. It is possible, of course, to abuse drugs in this category as well, and that also would be contrary to God's will for His followers.]

The Bible does not specifically address the use of controlled substances; refined drugs and synthetic drug compounds were virtually nonexistent during biblical times so substances such as LSD, marijuana, heroin, Ecstasy, cocaine, methamphetamine are not mentioned in Scripture. However, there are several Biblical principles that make it evident that any use of such substances is wrong for a follower of Christ.

First of all, Christians are commanded in Scripture to respect and obey the laws of the land, except when these laws violate divine imperatives.[4] In the United States, it is a crime to use, possess, manufacture, or distribute drugs classified as having a potential for abuse. For those in countries where recreational drug use is allowed, there are other Scriptural mandates which indicate that drug use has no part in the life of a believer, no matter what their national identity.

For example, God prohibits drunkenness because it compromises a person's mind and body. Most, if not all, illegal drugs would have the same affect, so the same prohibition obviously would apply. Christians are instructed to be in control of their decision-making processes; they must not partake of anything that erodes their ability to act in ways that are honoring to God.

The thought life of a follower of Christ is to be under His control. Paul challenged the church at Corinth to bring into captivity "every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5) because the way a person thinks is central to the way he lives. A drug-fogged mind hinders people from properly assessing right from wrong, and good from evil. A clear mind—which is impossible under the influence of drugs—is crucial to self-control and making proper moral and behavioral choices.

The use of controlled substances contributes to crime in multiple ways. Statistics show that offenders often were under the influence of drugs when they committed crimes. It is well-documented that drug use (along with alcohol use) is a leading factor in domestic violence, road rage, child abuse, suicide, and a variety of other criminal and destructive behaviors. Since Christians are instructed to avoid even the appearance of evil, there is no circumstance in which such drug use is acceptable.

Finally, use of drugs is harmful to the body, not just physically, but mentally and emotionally as well. The negative effects on a person's health are potentially devastating. High doses of many drugs, or impure or more dangerous substitutes for these drugs, can cause immediate life-threatening health problems such as heart attacks, respiratory failure, and coma. Combining drugs with each other or with alcohol is especially

dangerous. The followers of Christ must have no part in behaviors which threaten their bodies. Christians have a God-given responsibility to be good stewards of what the Lord has so graciously provided them, and this includes their health.

In conclusion, any doubts about whether even moderate use of alcohol, tobacco, or illicit drugs is appropriate for a Christian can be addressed by thoughtfully and prayerfully answering these questions:

- Does this have potential to harm me physically? Romans 12:1; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
- Is it a good use of the financial resources God has given me? 1 Corinthians 4:2
- Do I want my children or other young people to follow my example in this? Ephesians 6:4
- Does it compromise my Christian identity and testimony? 2 Corinthians 6:17
- Can I do this in Christ's name? Colossians 3:17

[1] See Proverbs 23:20-21; Luke 21:34; Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 5:11 and 6:10; Ephesians 5:18

[2] See Leviticus 10:8-11.

[3]John 8:36

[4] See Romans 13:1-7.

Counsel for Ministers:

We must be careful not to "explain" Scriptures that refer to the use of wine by stating that the wine of Bible times was really only unfermented fruit of the vine. Clearly, at least some Biblical references point to a fermented beverage, because the end result was intoxication. (See Genesis 9:20-27; 19:30-38; Esther 1:9-22, etc.) Wine may not have been fermented to the degree that it is today, but it is incorrect to refer to it simply as grape juice.

In New Testament times, due to the lack of modern methods of sanitation, the water was not very clean. It likely was filled with bacteria and other contaminates. As a result, the practice of drinking wine was common, because wine was far less likely to be contaminated than water. When Paul counseled Timothy to refrain from drinking water, but rather to "use a little wine for thy stomach's sake," he was not recommending wine as a social drink, but rather for medicinal purposes. The very fact that Paul had to mention the use of wine as a curative indicates that Timothy was abstinent in his personal life.

Creation

The Word of God begins with the statement, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). The Biblical explanation of origins, described in the first three chapters of Genesis, is foundational to a correct understanding of the other doctrines of Scripture. If one undermines or challenges the Creation account, the rest of the Bible is also undermined and challenged. Psalm 11:3 asks the question, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" In light of this verse, it should come as no surprise that Satan seeks to attack God's Word by discrediting and/or refuting the foundational truths documented in Genesis.[1]

The Genesis description of creation is simple and specific, establishing a definitive beginning of the universe and all it contains, and recording that God the Creator accomplished this creative act in a six-day period. This account is comprehended by faith: Hebrews 11:3 asserts, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Scripture also offers insight as to why the Genesis record is so contested, relating, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Some propose that an understanding of origins should be based on scientific research rather than faith. However, evolution is also a belief system. Scientists are not neutral; they all begin with beliefs which determine how they interpret evidence. Thus, conflict between the Genesis account of creation and the various theories of evolution is actually a conflict between religious worldviews. Each individual must choose whether to place his faith in the eternal God and Creator of the universe, or in the viewpoint of fallen, mortal man.

There are a number of reasons why it is vital that Christians take an uncompromising stand regarding the truth of the Bible account of creation.

The Bible account of creation identifies the Triune God as the Creator. Our culture today interprets the word *god* in a variety of ways, including an embodiment of nature, the universe, or each individual himself. The Genesis record reveals God to be the Supreme Being—not merely a different type of being or a superior being, but *the* Supreme Being—establishing Him as being eternal in existence, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and the unseen Creator of all things, visible and invisible.[2]

The Bible account of creation identifies man. Human beings are not just an evolutionary happenstance or a random conglomeration of cells in which life spontaneously arose. Genesis 1:27 tells us, "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." The Biblical account of the creation of man teaches that we have a Creator to whom we are responsible.

The Bible account of creation is fundamental to the message of the Gospel. The third chapter of Genesis relates that the first man's disobedience brought guilt, punishment, and death into this world.[3] If there had been no original sin, there would be no need for redemption. Because of sin, there was a need for a Savior, and the first promise of the Redeemer is found in Genesis 3:15. That promise was fulfilled when God "gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16-17).

The Bible account of creation is the basis for laws and morality. The principles of right and wrong are anchored in the fact that God, as Creator, has the right to ordain what is right or wrong because He created us and thus He owns us. The evolutionary philosophy, which rejects a divine Creator, regards the universe as the result of random chance. When there is no absolute authority, the basis for morality becomes whatever seems right or convenient to an individual at any given time.[4]

The Bible account of creation substantiates God's miracle-working power. If the miraculous is rejected for

the first chapters of Genesis, then the miracle of the resurrection must also be rejected. And the resurrection of Christ is a key truth of Christianity, for "if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Corinthians 15:14).

The Biblical account of Creation is true, literal, and perfect. In order to preserve the structure of Christianity, the followers of Christ must protect the foundational truths expounded in Genesis, and be willing to stand against the forces in current society which would promote the doctrine of evolution.

[1] This section is not intended to present a scientific argument in the ongoing creation vs. evolution debate. There are many reputable organizations that focus on providing scientific data supporting the Biblical account of creation. Currently, two recommended resources are Ken Ham's *Answers in Genesis* organization, and *The Institute for Creation Research*.

[2] See Exodus 20:11; Nehemiah 9:6

[3] Romans 5:12-17 explains that death reigned over humanity from the time of man's fall. However, through the death of Jesus Christ, mankind can be freed from the condemnation of sin.

[4] An example of this is found in Judges 17:6, which relates that when the people had no king to tell them what to do, they all did whatever was right in their own eyes.

The Principle of Subordination

The Biblical mandate to submit ourselves to those God has placed in authority over us is timeless. In the Old Testament, insubordination to God's leaders brought eternal consequences, as in the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (see Numbers 16). The writer of Hebrews admonishes, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account" (Hebrews 13:17). Order is necessary for the welfare of the church, and believers are instructed to yield to the authority of those who are set over them by the Lord, who in turn, give an account of themselves to God. Romans 13:1 points out that "there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God," so those who resist the authority of church leadership are rebelling against what God has instituted.

We find an example of the principle of subordination in 1 Corinthians 11, where Paul addressed the practice of women covering their heads when in church. Paul wanted the Corinthians to understand that God has an established order, and subjection to those in authority was vital. By creating man first and then woman, God set forth an order and established the roles He wanted men and women to have. This order did not imply inferiority, but rather a system for working together.

At the time of Paul's writing, for a man to wear a head covering while worshipping showed another authority had come between him and God. A woman worshipping without her head covered indicated that she was not subjecting herself to her husband, and therefore not to God.

Paul's conclusion on the matter of head coverings is found in verses 15-16: he plainly declared that a woman's long hair is her glory and was given to her for a covering, though he did not forbid the use of additional head coverings. Furthermore, it was not to be a point of contention.

Counsel to Ministers:

As an organization, we uphold Paul's conclusion that a woman's head covering is her long hair. "Long" is a relative term, and thus is impossible to legislate due to ethnicity, genetic characteristics, and other circumstances. Therefore, we must be cautious about arriving at conclusions when we observe women who have hair shorter than we might prefer.

We do not encourage or discourage an additional covering, such as a hat. No reason prevents a Christian woman from wearing a hat at church if she chooses to do so, if it is in keeping with the Biblical principles of discreet and modest attire, rather than being ostentatious or flamboyant in nature. However, the wearing of hats by women in worship is not a requirement.

As an international body of believers, leadership in all areas of the world must be careful not to take cultural symbols and make them into a point of faith for Christians everywhere.

Appearance/Modesty

Modesty is a condition of the heart that is exemplified outwardly, and this applies to men as well as women. People of God must take care that they carry themselves with a sense of propriety and humility, in order to best represent Him. This includes being mindful of their appearance, attire, and demeanor.

Fashions change with each generation, and what is appropriate and modest for believers in one era and culture may not be appropriate and/or modest in another. However, the Biblical principles regarding godly appearance are timeless.

When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, they went from innocence to guilt. Their eyes were opened and they knew that they were naked. Suddenly plagued by shame and embarrassment, they sewed fig leaves together, and "made themselves aprons" (Genesis 3:7). The Lord responded to Adam and Eve's shame over their unclothed condition; Genesis 3:21 states that "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." It is instructive that while Adam and Eve had covered themselves with aprons, God covered them with coats. In so doing, He began to define and teach the principle of modesty.

Instruction regarding modesty continues in subsequent books of the Bible. For example, when God instituted forms of worship for the Children of Israel, He commanded, "Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon" (Exodus 20:26). Later, He ordained that the priests were to be clothed with linen breeches, for the express purpose of modesty.

In the New Testament, a guideline regarding modesty is given in 1 Timothy 2:9, where Paul taught that women were to "adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness [a demeanor which conveys a sense of dignity and reserve] and sobriety [self-control, level-headedness, and common sense, rather than levity and frivolity]." Godly women were to dress in manner that would draw attention to the Spirit within them rather than to the physical body. The same principle applies in our day.

In Philippians 4:5, the instruction is given to "let your moderation be known unto all men." The word translated *moderation* not only means "temperate," but also "appropriate." The same thought is expressed in 1 Corinthians 9:25: "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." The admonition to temperance in "all things" includes being temperate in one's appearance and attire. Based on these verses, we can conclude that extreme, ostentatious, or gaudy clothing, hairstyles, and accessories are not appropriate for a follower of Christ.

We live in an ungodly, sexually-permissive society, where what is wholesome, modest, and discreet is characterized as odd, and what is immodest and provocative is glamorized. The world often demands that women present themselves in revealing attire if they want to be considered sophisticated or attractive. However, godly men and women have a different view. Those who want their appearance to reveal a modest, holy heart will purpose to be discreet and unpretentious in their attire because they know that will please God, and will not encourage lust, which is sin (see Matthew 5:28). All believers, both men and women, should maintain a standard of attire that honors God, does not lead others away from Biblical principles and behavior, and sets a good example to younger individuals.

Just as the Word of God provides guidelines related to the attire of a Christian, it also provides guidelines in the matter of ornamentation, or the wearing of jewelry. Once again, the emphasis is to be placed on inward rather than outward adorning.

The Bible presents a number of contrasts with respect to jewelry and appearance. For example, the vain and brazen Queen Jezebel, who arrogantly "painted her face, and tired her head" (2 Kings 9:30) as she faced

imminent death, is portrayed completely different from the holy woman Sara, who is pointed to as an example for modest and godly women (see 1 Peter 3:6). In Revelation, Babylon is described as a harlot, bedecked "with gold and precious stones and pearls" (Revelation 17:4), in stark contrast to the Bride of Christ, who is "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white" (Revelation 19:8).

In Isaiah 3, God condemned the women of Jerusalem whose adornments, hair dressing, and attire were indicators of their pride and arrogance. We read, "Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: . . . In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon [adornments in their hair and around their necks], the chains [ornaments which dangled from the ears], and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, the rings, and nose jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, the glasses [mirrors of polished metal], and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the vails" (Isaiah 3:16, 18-23). What existed within was evidenced by what was without, so God decreed that they would be smitten with disease, abused, and judged.

In the New Testament era, Paul noted to Timothy that immodesty is marked by adornment that is elaborate, extravagant, excessive, or expensive. He instructed godly women to adorn themselves "not with broided hair [gold weaved in braids] or gold, or pearls [referring to jewelry, ornaments], or costly array, but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (1 Timothy 2:9). Decorating themselves with jewelry in an ostentatious manner was a common practice among non-Christian women of Paul's day, and he was pointing out that those who professed faith in Christ should refrain from such practices.[1]

Peter referred to the same principle in 1 Peter 3:3, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of 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." Peter was not suggesting that personal appearance be disregarded. Rather, he was teaching godly women that their appearance should reflect their inner spiritual beauty.

There is nothing unscriptural about a desire to look attractive. However, one should not dress or be adorned in a manner that would draw attention to the physical body itself. Extravagant finery or jewelry may reflect a spirit of pride and vanity. Some types of jewelry today involve the practice of body piercing, which is condemned in Scripture as having association with evil pagan practices.[2] That would preclude piercing the body to allow for jewelry to be inserted in ears, nostrils, lips, cheeks, etc. Such a practice is often done to identify with a peer group that is non-Christian.

Above all, followers of Christ should seek spiritual beauty, which does not come from outward adornment but from godliness within.

[1] The Apostle John reinforced the concept of abstaining from worldly customs when he instructed the Early Church, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:15-16).

[2] In calling His people to be set apart from the ungodly nations around them, God instructed the Children of Israel, "Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you" (Leviticus 19:28). So in addition to the prohibition against body piercing, this verse also precludes tattoos. The phrase "print any marks" refers to inscribed or engraved symbols or words, and is used only here. Although body piercing and tattooing are not necessarily associated with false religions in our day, one should always be concerned about how actions might please or displease God. Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 teach us that our bodies are the temples of God, so we must avoid practices which desecrate His temple.

Counsel for Ministers

At times, pastors may be asked about our church policy regarding jewelry. We do not use individuals in the work who choose to wear jewelry. We do not object to workers wearing of a simple pin, clasp, or ornamentation that decorates or finishes an outfit. The same goes for a watch, tie tack, tie or scarf clasp, or utilitarian items of that nature.

Participation in any organization comes with expectations. The decision regarding whether or not to abide by this expectation of the Apostolic Faith (and thus have the privilege of participating in the work of the church), rests upon the individual. As pastors, we simply state our policy. We do not suggest that those who choose to wear jewelry are not Christians; that decision is an individual choice and we will respect it as such. However, as a church we have chosen to maintain this long-held holiness tradition in our organization, and we expect those who participate in our work to respect our traditions and policies, just as we respect the right of others to hold a different view.

We encourage pastors to contact their District Superintendent or the Superintendent General if they have questions regarding how to handle this situation.

In the matter of dress, what is deemed "modest" depends partially upon era and culture. The basic Bible injunction is modesty and discreetness, and that guideline is timeless: it transcends all variables.

The Bible is clear that God wants men and women to properly represent their own gender. We read in Deuteronomy 22:5, "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God." A closer look at the meaning of the words used in the original Hebrew more accurately reveals the intended point. The word *kaeliy*, translated in this verse as "that which pertaineth unto a man," refers to armor. The word *simlah*, translated as "woman's garment," refers to any type of women's clothing. Thus, this verse was prohibiting dressing to purposefully disguise gender. In pagan practice, intentionally confusing gender led to gross moral improprieties. Subsequent verses also relate to maintaining the distinctness of species created by God, lending further credence to this interpretation.

Today, cross-dressing is common among men who want to become women, and women who want to become men. However, the word *abomination* is unequivocal. It means "disgusting" or "abhorred." In other words, God hates it when men and women use their attire to simulate a different gender. Christians must take care that their clothing is a correct portrayal of who they are—whether male or female.

Pastors may wonder how to deal with concerns regarding appropriate attire. It may not be wise to address a whole group of workers, such as the choir or orchestra, in order to correct a matter that actually concerns only one or two individuals.

We also should be mindful of the fact that there is a difference between a thoughtless (or even somewhat careless) attitude regarding appropriate attire, and a spirit that is resistant to the Biblical principles of modesty and temperance. As pastors, our goal is to teach the Biblical principles, and encourage everyone to be sensitive and open to the instruction of the Spirit in the matter of modest dress.

Evangelism – Sharing The Faith

God has given the pattern for evangelism in His Word and provides the power for it through His Spirit.[1] The word *evangelism* is based upon the Greek word *euaggelizo*, which means, "to bring good news."[2]

In the Old Testament, a succession of prophets called the people of Israel and Judah to repentance, urging them to forsake their wicked ways and turn back to God. The Book of Jonah reveals that God also had concern for the heathen who are without hope apart from Him. After his experience in the belly of the whale, the prophet was told, "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee" (Jonah 3:2). When he obeyed, and delivered the message God gave him, the people believed God and repented.

In the New Testament, evangelizing refers to bringing the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Evangelism was commanded by Jesus. In the Great Commission, first given to His apostles, He charged them to go into all the world and "preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15; see also Matthew 28:18-20). This was not a new idea to the disciples. From His first words to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19), Jesus had been preparing them for this task through teaching and example, helping them to understand that His followers were to participate in the divine activity of God on this earth by carrying His truth to lost humanity.

Evangelism is to be done by preachers, like the Apostles did on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:36-38), and as Philip did both to groups and individuals (Acts 8:12, 35).[3] Clearly, God instructs the church to send out witnesses that others may hear, for "how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Romans 10:14-15).[4] The church is also expected to help those who are spreading the Gospel; for example, we read that Paul received help from churches such as Philippi.[5]

Evangelism is also to be accomplished by individual Christians, for it is the duty of the people of God to "shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). The true response of one who has found Christ is to bring others. The Apostle Peter was brought to Jesus by his brother Andrew, and Philip brought his friend Nathanael to Jesus, urging him to "Come and see" (John 1:46).[6]

Christians are also to help those who are actively engaged in spreading the Gospel, as Paul praised Gaius for doing.[7] The work of soul-winning will involve sacrifice and effort,[8] but commendation and rewards will be given to those who do so.[9]

The Gospel message that believers declare was summarized by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. He delivered four vital truths: that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, that He rose again, and that this was "according to the scriptures." John the Baptist's message, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2) is still a compelling message in our day.

[1] Acts 1:8

[2] The word *euaggelizo* is often translated *preach.* For example see 1 Corinthians 15:1.

[3] See also Acts 8:25; 1 Corinthians 1:17; 2 Timothy 4:2-5

[4] For example, the church in Antioch sent Barnabas and Saul. See Acts 13:1-3.

[5] Philippians 4:15-16

[6] John 1:40-42, 45-46. See also Matthew 5:16.

[7] 3 John 5-8

[8] Psalm 126:5, Galatians 6:9

[9] See Proverbs 11:30 and Daniel 12:3.

Apologetics – Explaining and Defending the Faith

Throughout the history of the church, Christians have been called upon to explain what they believe, and defend their faith against those who doubt or challenge it. The word *apologetics* comes from the Greek word *apologia* which means, "a verbal defense."[1] Therefore, Christian apologetics relates to answering those who question or oppose the key truths of the Bible. It is not a demonstration of oratorical skills or intellectual abilities, but the calling of God for all Christians.

The concept of explaining and defending the faith is found in both the Old and New Testaments. The Book of Isaiah includes God's entreaty, "Come now, and let us reason together" (Isaiah 1:18). Job reasoned with his three friends (see Job 13:6), challenging their assumptions about how God works. In the New Testament, the apostle Paul spoke of his ministry as "the defense and confirmation of the gospel" (Philippians 1:7). He preached Christ to the Jews in the synagogue at Thessalonica, and when his teaching was resisted, he gave his famous dissertation on Mars Hill (see Acts 17:17, 22-34) to the men of Athens. He also explained and defended the faith to the Galatians and the believers at Corinth. The Apostle John's letters recorded in 1, 2, and 3 John are also examples of apologetics.

Perhaps the key verse for Christian apologetics is found in 1 Peter 3:15, when Peter challenged those in the Early Church to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."[2] Christians are to be prepared to give an account of the basic truths of Christianity and a convincing rebuttal for false accusations against the Word of God. Though the defense of the faith may be strong, it is to be done with meekness and respect;[3] the communication of spiritual truths should never be done in a harsh or disrespectful manner.

Christian apologetics deal with three main aspects of presenting the faith: what Christians believe, why Christians believe, and how Christians defend their beliefs.

What Christians Believe—Followers of Christ base their beliefs on the unshakable truths recorded in the Word of God. Foundational truths include the existence of God (Hebrews 11:6), that God created everything that exists (Genesis 1:1), and that the Bible is God's divinely inspired Word (2 Timothy 3:16). They believe in the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:19), the fall of man (Romans 5:12-14), and that justification is available through Jesus Christ (Acts 4:10-12). These beliefs provide direction, vision, values, and principles for living, and equip the followers of Christ with a consistent and cohesive Biblical worldview.

Why Christians Believe—Christians believe the Word of God as a matter of faith, but this faith is both reasonable and rational. It answers the questions of the mind and heart; it is verified by the intricate design of nature and the fulfillment of prophecies; and it is proved out through personal experience.

How Christians Defend the Faith—There are two main methods of Christian apologetics. The first is *classical* or *evidential apologetics*. This method is based upon offering proofs or evidences of the veracity of Scripture, pointing to historical records, scientific support, fulfilled prophecy, miracles, etc. Jesus utilized this type of apologetics when He sent a message to the imprisoned John the Baptist, "Shew John…the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matthew 11:4-5). Evidential apologetics can also be based upon personal experience; for example, when the blind man was healed by Jesus, he could not answer the Pharisees' questions, but simply said, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25).

The other primary method of apologetics is called *presuppositional apologetics*. This technique confronts preconceived ideas and presumptions of those who oppose Christianity. Paul's sermon on Mars Hill, referenced above, is an obvious example of this technique.

Effective apologetics may involve studying a wide range of topics, and giving serious thought to the questions commonly posed by unbelievers. However, the workings of God can go beyond a logical explanation, so a convincing defense of the faith can also be as simple as giving one's personal testimony.

[1] Paul used this word in Acts 22:1 and 1 Corinthians 9:3.

2 See also Acts 25:16; 2 Corinthians 10:5-6; and 2 Timothy 4:16.

[3] The word *prautes* which is translated *meekness* in this verse is also translated in other places as *gentleness*.

Ministerial Identity

The Call to Preach

All who come to Christ are also called by God to serve in His kingdom. In this sense, every Christian is a God-called minister. However, God gives a distinct and specific call to those whom He chooses to preach the Gospel.[1] Ministerial training, a desire to lead, or even a commendation from others does not provide a sufficient basis for assuming there is a call upon our lives (although these may at times be indicators). Authority to do the work of God must come from God—He does the selecting and the empowering for this task. Jesus said to His disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (John 15:16).

In the Old Testament, no one could assume the role of God's spokesman without first receiving His commission. In the New Testament, the Apostles provide examples of the necessity of a definite call. That call may come in a variety of ways and settings: Moses was called in the desert through a burning bush (Exodus 3:1-10), Samuel as a child in the Tabernacle (1 Samuel 3:1-18), Isaiah through a vision in the Temple (Isaiah 6:1-9), Peter and Andrew while casting nets by the seashore (Matthew 4:18-19), and Paul in a light from Heaven on the road to Damascus (Acts 26:16). However and wherever the call may come, when God appoints us to the ministry of the Word, we will know we are divinely called and commissioned for this role. That unshakable assurance will be necessary when the inevitable challenges come.

If God has truly called us to preach, He will bring us to a point of personal conviction and assurance that He has called us to preach and teach the Word, and to minister to the people of God.[2] Though the prophet Jeremiah was initially reluctant, he ultimately had such a burden to preach the words of God that he likened it to a "burning fire'" (Jeremiah 20:9). Paul cried out, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Corinthians 9:16).

The Apostle Peter observed, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21). The word translated *moved* in this verse is translated *drive* and *driven* in Acts 27, verses 15, 17, and 27, referring to a ship being "driven" by the wind. By this, we understand that the holy men of old spoke the Word of God through the driving force of the Holy Spirit. This same compelling force will drive us as we are called to proclaim the Gospel in our day.

In addition to the inward confirmation that God places in our own hearts, He will also confirm a genuine call outwardly to others.[3] First, our lives will clearly meet the Scriptural requirements laid out in the third chapter of 1 Timothy and the first chapter of Titus. Those of a spiritual mind who know us best will recognize in us the competencies and qualifications for the task, because God equips all those He calls with the needful abilities. We will demonstrate aptitude and faithfulness as a worker in various avenues of Christian service, and those in authority in the church will have a settled conviction that our call is genuine.

Lastly, there will also be verification in the response to our initial ministry efforts—the Lord's blessing will be manifested, for the same God who called us will work through us.

[1] See Acts 13:2; Acts 20:28; Romans 10:15; Ephesians 4:11-12; 2 Timothy 1:11.

[2] Some may initially attempt to ignore or sidestep the call of God. However, God will with time bring them to a place of acceptance if they keep their consecrations.

[3] For example, see 1 Samuel 10:9-12.

Counsel for Ministers:

It is possible for a person to be mistaken about his call to the ministry, and to aspire to that role when he is not in possession of the necessary abilities or spiritual qualifications. While we must exercise care to avoid discouraging anyone, it is important to be very certain that a person truly is called before being given an opportunity to preach. In some cases, timing may be an issue even though the qualifications appear to be in place. If there is any question about the matter, it is best to encourage such individuals to prove their call by a demonstration of faithfulness, utilizing their abilities as workers in various other avenues of Christian service until God sends a definite confirmation to those in spiritual authority.

The following attributes *may* be indicators that a person is called to preach, as long as they are coupled with a sense that a call from God exists. However, none of them should be considered indicators in themselves.

- Fluency in public speaking.
- Good knowledge and understanding of the Bible.
- A compassion for people who are hurting.
- The respect of others.
- Faithful in prayer.
- Organizational or leadership abilities.
- A willingness to serve sacrificially in other areas of the Gospel work.

Spiritual Qualifications

The word *minister* is a general term that can refer to any of the Lord's servants. However, it more specifically relates to those who are called to a position of authority within the church, and charged by God with the responsibility of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The terms *elder*, *bishop*, *deacon*, and *pastor* are also used in Scripture to designate individuals who serve the church in leadership roles.

As ministers of the Gospel, we stand before the people as representatives of the eternal God. For that reason, those who answer the call to the ministry of the Word must be mature, Spirit-filled Christians who possess an intense love for God and their fellow man. It is our responsibility to call the lost to salvation, and to instruct believers in their worship of God and their conduct before the people of the world. To do this, we first must have sought and received the three foundational Christian experiences of justification, sanctification, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost. In addition, our personal conduct, character, and unselfish service to God and others must bear witness to the reality of our walk with God.[1]

A basic requirement for Christian ministers is a genuine sensitivity to our own spiritual needs; we must have ears that are open to God's voice, and hearts that are fully committed to do nothing but God's will. We will develop and model personal spiritual disciplines such as prayer, study of the Word, servanthood, submission, and compassion. We need a genuine love for souls and a longing to lead them to a personal relationship with Christ, as well as a desire to contribute in any way possible to their spiritual growth and development. And we must hold the Word of God in reverent regard, faithfully declaring and upholding the underlying tenets of the Christian faith.

There are two primary Scripture passages which describe the qualifications of the bishop, pastor, or elder: 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.[2] Both were written by the Apostle Paul, and both were addressed to younger men in the faith who had been given the authority to train and appoint leaders in the Early Church.

The epistle of 1 Timothy establishes that ministers of the Word must be above reproach, in Biblically sanctioned marriages,[3] and individuals whose children are in subjection. They must be temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to wine, not belligerent, gentle, free of a contentious spirit, not influenced by a love of money. They must manage their households well, not be new converts, and possess good reputations both inside and outside the church.

The epistle of Titus presents a similar list, noting that elders in the church must be living lives that are above reproach, in Biblically sanctioned marriages, and whose children are in subjection rather than being reckless and out of control. They are not to be self-willed or quick-tempered, given to wine, inclined to violent or high-handed action, or influenced by monetary gain. They should be hospitable, lovers of what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, and people who uphold the Word of God.

In 1 Peter 5:3, the Apostle Peter points out that those in positions of spiritual authority are to be examples to the people. As ministers, we have a solemn charge to represent what God desires every member of the congregation to be in character and conduct, for Paul told Timothy, ". . . be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation [conduct], in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12). The life of the messenger must be consistent with the message. If we are married, our spouse must be a good example of a Christian as well.

Throughout the Old Testament, it is clear that people tended to follow the example of their leaders. When Israel had a wicked king, the people were more likely to be sinful. When Israel had a good king, the people were more likely to follow the Lord. Thus, the godly lifestyle of those of us in the ministry is critically important, as it is the visual sermon that people see and pattern their lives after.

There are many factors that contribute to the success of our efforts in the ministry, but the most vital quali-

fication of all is the unction of the Spirit of God upon us and our work. We must pray for the constant presence of the Holy Spirit on everything that we do, and never be satisfied without it. Other aspects of preparation and training are necessary, but we cannot allow them to minimize the importance of the Spirit of God.

In His work for the Kingdom, the Holy Spirit takes our Godgiven talents, our spiritual preparation, our mental training, and our physical qualifications and works through them in fulfilling the divine will and commission. We must always have Him with us to motivate and empower us. This is the "absolute must" of our ministry.

As ministers, we are called to be soldiers for God, ambassadors for Christ, prophets of righteousness, preachers of eternal truth, and representatives of a sovereign God. We must have the apostolic spirit and do the apostle's work. To fulfill our charge as God intended, we must be diligent to see that, wherever possible, every hindrance in our lives is removed, every weakness strengthened, and every deficiency built up, that we may be capable ministers, soldiers, ambassadors, preachers, representatives, and faithful shepherds.

[1] There is no double standard in the Gospel. The qualifications given in Scripture *ought* to be true of every child of God, but they *must* be true of those in spiritual authority in the church, for church leaders are called to be examples to the flock.

[2] The requirements for a deacon are given in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

[3]This requirement does not mean that an unmarried individual cannot be in the ministry. Rather, it stipulates that one who is married must have a marriage that aligns to Biblical standards. See the section on *The Sanctity of Marriage* for a further explanation of this topic.

Counsel to Ministers

As representatives of the Apostolic Faith organization, every minister should understand, support, and be able to explain the Scriptural basis for the doctrinal positions of this work.

Personal Fitness

In addition to the spiritual qualifications necessary for those of us who are called to be ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, there are also certain attitudes, characteristics, and qualities that are necessary or highly desirable.[1]

First and foremost, as ministers we must possess an unfailing fidelity to the doctrines of the Bible, guarding the Word of God as a sacred trust and treasure, and evidencing our commitment to "hold fast the form of sound words, . . . in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 1:13).[2] We must be courageous and unapologetic regarding the fact that we stand for the Latter Rain Gospel and a holiness way of life. In addition, we need to be absolutely loyal to the organization, those in spiritual authority over us, our fellow ministers, and the flock to whom we minister. As we do our best to honor and support one another, be subject to one another, and stand beside each other, God will be able to bless our efforts.

The most effective ministers will possess a deep conviction that the only way to find one's life is to lose it in service to God and people (see Matthew 10:39). Unselfishness and a sincere attitude of kindness, patience, and longsuffering toward others go a long way in establishing a basis for effective service in this field. God-called leaders are focused on building God's kingdom, not their own empires or reputations. The Apostle Paul established the standard for all believers in Ephesians 4:1-3, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye 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."

It is important that we never regard the work of the ministry as a mere duty. We must see our call in its true light—as the great privilege that it is. The shepherds of God's flock should model sincerity and enthusiasm for the work of the Lord, and be quick to show thoughtfulness, compassion, gentleness, tact, cheerfulness, and appreciation. The members of our congregations will unquestionably benefit if we are reasonable, realistic, not headstrong, and free from self-absorption, pride, or aloofness.

We should do our best to be unruffled by the distractions or emergencies that will occasionally arise in a Gospel service, or other times when we are ministering. If we overreact or are needlessly disturbed by things that happen, the congregation will be apt to follow our poor example.

Willingness to serve wherever we have been placed is essential, for Peter instructed, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly" (1 Peter 5:2). When we are content with the location where we have been called to serve and patient with challenges we encounter there, the effectiveness of our ministry will be positively impacted. Often those we serve are encouraged by our love and concern for that location. We must look for the good in any and every post where we have the privilege to serve, and remain convinced that God is in our assignment for as long as we are asked to be at that location. Wherever we labor, we must pray for grace from Heaven to do the work God wants done, remembering that our role is simply to be faithful to Him.

The quality of flexibility is valuable in the ministry. It is not realistic to assume that all people will think, act, or work alike, even when they are walking in true Biblical holiness. God made us as individuals, so we will need to be able to blend and balance the varying perspectives, opinions, and backgrounds of the people among whom we minister. As ministers we must set the example of adaptability to the location, culture, and expectations where we have been called to serve if we expect others to respond positively to our leadership and preaching of the truth. Paul summarized the principle of ministerial adaptability when he said, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22).[3]

No ministry will come without opposition of some sort, so fulfilling our commission to proclaim the truth will require courage. The Word of God directs us to be bold in exposing and refuting doctrinal error.[4] The message we are to proclaim will offend some, be a stumbling block to others, and be considered foolishness

by many in the world,[5] but that must never deter us from fulfilling our God-given call. Ministers of the Gospel must have an unwavering sense of purpose, and be willing and able to endure reproach.

Paul modeled this type of spiritual fortitude, saying, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (2 Corinthians 4:8-9). When we face crises in our personal lives or in the flock among whom we minister, we find strength and comfort in the assurance that "he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Timothy 1:12).

As ministers, we must have lives that are above reproach. Our character must reflect that of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, for we are His representatives. He was holy, just, honest, trustworthy, and righteous in all His dealings, so we must be holy, just, honest, trustworthy, and righteous in all our dealings. We want to live so those inside and outside of the church will give a good verdict when they evaluate our moral and spiritual lives.[6] The demand for ministers to be of irreproachable character is one we must insist upon today, as Paul did in the time of the early church.[7]

It is important to display Biblical integrity in matters such as treatment of others, confidentiality, dependability, and absolute honesty. A minister must be an impartial person, who will care for all the sheep of his flock equally. Paul addressed the character trait of diligence, commending a brother, "whom we have oftentimes proved diligent [fervent] in many things" (2 Corinthians 8:22). We ought to be fervent in the ministry, for our calling deserves our very best in terms of effort and commitment!

What we say in the pulpit must be backed up by our personal lives—the message must be consistent with the life of the messenger. We cannot give what we have not received. We cannot inspire men to do their best unless we live our best. We need to show by our example of prayer, consecration, and willingness that we have a right to preach on those subjects. People are more likely to look at us than they are to hear our words! One author who wrote on the subject of ministerial character noted, "When words do not penetrate, it may be because there is a feeble man behind them. When ideas do not kindle, it is because there is no divine fire in the lips that speak them."[8] We must preach with conviction and live what we preach, or our words will ring hollow.

Ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ should possess a sound mind and common sense, as well as a capacity for clear thinking. A strong, well-rounded intelligence is necessary equipment for this field of endeavor, for we are charged with setting forth to men a clear exposition of God's truth.

The Bible, of course, will be our primary textbook, since a thorough knowledge of Scripture is vital. However, we should also seek to broaden our understanding of other key subjects, doing our best to be students of history and society. While a breadth of knowledge is largely based on experience and can only be acquired over a period of time, we should always keep a "learner" mentality. If we continually and prayerfully observe the complexities of human existence, striving to be understanding of how people live, work, and struggle, we will be better able to minister to them and guide them in matters of spiritual importance.

Imagination and originality are helpful traits for successful preaching. It is also beneficial to have a good power of language, although expository skill can be developed through training.

As ministers and pastors, we should take care of ourselves physically. God expects us to be good stewards of our time and our resources, so it stands to reason that we should also be good stewards of our physical bodies. In 2 Corinthians 4:7, Paul speaks of having this "treasure in earthen vessels," and this is literally true. Our physical bodies have limitations and we must be realistic about them. Proper rest, exercise, diet, etc. are all acknowledgements of those limitations and must be a part of our lives. We should do our best to manage the varied demands placed on our spiritual, physical, and emotional resources through balanced seasons of personal retreat, rest, and recreation.

In conclusion, the call to the ministry is not to the faint of heart. Challenges will come. It takes courage, strength of character, perseverance, determination, and the grace of God to be successful in this work! Those

who are entering the ministry should be made aware of this fact, and those who have been preaching for years should remind themselves to continually hone their skills, develop their talents, and strive for excellence in their work for the Lord.

[1] No doubt some of the great preachers in history were lacking in one or more of the characteristics addressed in this section. The fact that a preacher succeeded in the ministry without a particular attribute does not indicate that the attribute should be eliminated from the list of desirable characteristics. It simply means that the individual succeeded in spite of his lack, and possibly would have accomplished even more if he had possessed the attribute in question. *The Heart of the Yale Lectures* points out, "No one dares to say that the preacher who is deficient in one, or even several, of the desired ministerial qualifications will be a failure, for his strong points may compensate for his weaknesses. What can be said is this: Other things being equal, the man who possesses all of the qualifications … will achieve the highest measure of success in preaching."

[2] See also 2 Timothy 3:14; 4:1-5.

[3] This verse is not condoning sinful activity or doctrinal compromise in order to "save some." Paul was simply stating that he desired to approach men in the way that would have the most appeal to them, based on their backgrounds.

[4] For example, see 1 Timothy 1:3-4 and 2 Timothy 4:2.

[5] Romans 9:33; 1 Peter 2:8; 1 Corinthians 1:23; Galatians 5:11

[6] 1 Peter 2:11-12; 2 Corinthians 8:21

[7] Paul used the word "blameless" in 1 Timothy 3:2 to describe the manner of living that is necessary for those who are in leadership roles in the church. A merciful God will forgive failures that are repented of, but Scripture establishes a very high ethical and moral standard for those who are God's representatives in the capacity of ministers. Thus, certain types of failures would disqualify a person from participating in the ministry.

[8] Charles E. Jefferson, *The Building of the Church* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1911) pp.276-277

Counsel for Ministers

The call that we have is a gift from God. Brother Allen Crabtree, a veteran minister of the Gospel, used to say that "Being a preacher doesn't make you one whit better than anyone else." When we are ministering, we are simply exercising the particular gift that God has given us. And we are accountable for that. Paul evidenced a spirit of humility and service to others that should be our motto when he said, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:5).

Conduct

Paul's admonition to the elders at Ephesus reveals the importance of impeccable conduct among those who are called to be ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He wrote, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Timothy 4:16). Only when a minister has "take[n] heed" to himself—has evaluated and aligned his behavior and manner of living to God's standards—can he effectively minister to others.

Our credibility as ministers is contingent upon how we conduct ourselves. Paul's exhortations to Timothy offer specifics regarding the conduct of ministers, which can be summed up in five categories. We are to be: 1) steadfast in preaching Biblical truth; 2) courageous in uncovering and refuting doctrinal error; 3) examples of godly living; 4) committed to putting our best efforts and energy into the work of the ministry; and 5) willing to accept hardship and opposition in our service to the Lord.[1]

The effectiveness of our preaching can be greatly hindered or even destroyed by careless words or actions. All areas of our lives must be consistent with Biblical values and teachings, and we should unfailingly conduct ourselves in a manner that will honor Christ. Our in-the-pulpit persona must match our out-of-the-pulpit performance. People will have very little confidence in a minister who preaches with fiery passion but is lifeless during prayer meetings, or who outlines high standards with eloquence but fails to show a "pattern of good works" in his own life (see Titus 2:7).

As representatives of the eternal God, our authority in the church is to be undergirded by our example in six areas outlined by Paul in his instruction to Timothy: "Be thou an example [pattern, type, or model] of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity (1 Timothy 4:12). While all of these areas apply to our lives as ministers, only the first two areas, "word" and "conversation," will be addressed in this section.[2]

Word: The Bible sets forth many principles for proper communication (including both spoken and written words), and it is incumbent upon us, as leaders of God's flock, to set the right example in this critical area.[3] We should do our best to speak and write clearly, stating our points and offering our opinions with tact and kindness. Paul cautioned Titus to "speak evil of no man" (Titus 3:2), so we must guard against voicing criticism or complaint. We should make it a rule to maintain confidentiality regarding those who come to us for counsel or advice, and avoid unseemly lightness, jesting, and foolish talking (see Ephesians 5:4). Pointless philosophical and theological arguments should be avoided, along with foolish questions that would only precipitate strife (see 2 Timothy 2:16, 23). We should guard against giving any impression that we are "double-tongued" (1 Timothy 3:8) by making sure that we are not equivocal, saying one thing to this person and another to that person. We should take great care not to exaggerate the facts, misuse personal experiences, or gossip. Finally we must make every effort to maintain open and effective communication with our spouses and families, fellow ministers, workers in the church, members of the congregation, and those in the community where we serve.

Conversation [or behavior]: The topic of appropriate ministerial behavior encompasses a wide range of specifics. However, the guiding principle is that, by the help and grace of God, we give "no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed" (2 Corinthians 6:3).[4] We are to scrupulously avoid any behavior that would cause someone to discredit the Gospel. This means maintaining an uncompromising standard of personal and professional ethics.

It is critically important that our lives are morally above reproach, and this points to the necessity of guarding our hearts and minds against inappropriate sexual attractions. We need to be particularly discreet in our dealings with members of the opposite gender, not allowing ourselves to be placed in compromising or embarrassing situations. Paul admonished Timothy to treat younger women as sisters, adding "with all purity" (1 Timothy 5:2). The inference was that relationships should not become so "comfortable" that they

would approach anything close to impropriety. Paul enjoined members of the church at Thessalonica to "abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22) and that injunction would certainly pertain to the conduct of ministers of the Gospel.

As church leaders and public figures, we should conduct ourselves with appropriate personal dignity and decorum, especially when in the public eye. Propriety in demeanor, dress, and attitude is essential if we are to have the respect of those we lead. We must act with grace and good manners in every situation that may arise in the congregation, community, and home. It also is imperative that we build good civic and business reputations. We should meet financial obligations and commitments in a timely manner, remembering that our timeliness or lack thereof is not only a reflection on us, but also on the church.

It is important that we take care to faithfully use our time and energy in fulfilling our duties as ministers or pastors through proper work habits and reasonable schedules. This includes sharing responsibility when appropriate. We must not try to fill every role or be the only decision-maker. Rather, we should do our best to involve others by soliciting their input and involving them when possible. There is great value in appropriate delegation. It provides a venue for training others and allows us to extend our influence for God and the Gospel work to a greater degree than by doing all by ourselves.

We should show honor, respect, kindness, and appreciation toward everyone, while avoiding any affectation and pretense. Care should be taken not to show partiality to any special group, class, or individual in the congregation; we are called to minister to the needs of all, as we are led by the Spirit of God.

It is a good practice to be cautious about making casual judgments, believing evil of no one without clear evidence. Try to put the best construction on everything; you will appreciate it when your parishioners do the same for you! Challenges will come, but we must never retaliate in any way for unjust treatment or injury. Jesus instructed, "Pray for them which despitefully use you" (Matthew 5:44). If we do this, we have the assurance that our most bitter opponents can do no more than inconvenience us, or cause us some material discomfort or loss.

Having the mind of Christ will have a direct influence upon our behavior. Actions spring from thoughts, and thoughts are born in attitudes, for as a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). Our desire must be to continually align our thinking and behavior to the principles of God's Word, to love what He loves and hate what He hates, to uphold what He upholds and to reject what He rejects.

As we review our personal deportment and conduct, we do need to be aware that there is no such thing as perfection in the sense that God is perfect. We will never possess perfect wisdom nor have all knowledge; we are subject to the same physical, mental, and even emotional limitations as everyone else. However, as ministers of the Gospel, we must dedicate ourselves to striving for the kind of integrity and quality in our lives and relationships that bear unquestionable evidence of the presence of Christ within us.

[1] Paul's instruction to younger ministers in the faith, recorded in 1 and 2 Timothy and the book of Titus, will be helpful to all who have been called by God into positions of spiritual leadership in the church. Regular study of these passages will remind us of the principles by which we should order our lives.

[2] See the material in the sections of this manual titled *Spiritual Qualifications* and *Personal Fitness* for more on the remaining four internal qualities in which ministers are to be examples.

[3] For example, James 3:1-18 describes in expressive language the destructive power of the tongue. He begins that chapter by cautioning those who would be leaders that greater responsibility comes with "greater condemnation," or stricter judgment.

[4] The word *offence* in this verse means "cause for stumbling."

Counsel for Ministers

Sexual integrity is foundational to Christian life and ministry**.** Like a reputation, it takes years to build but only an instant to destroy. As ministers of the Gospel, we must strictly adhere to the Biblical ethic of sexual purity in singleness and fidelity in marriage, guarding against becoming emotionally, romantically, or sexually involved with someone other than our spouses.

Here are some suggestions that will help us to maintain moral integrity as ministers:

- We must never consider ourselves to be above temptation. Paul warns, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12).
- We must protect and nurture our own homes and families. While we are working to repair other people's marriages, we must never neglect our own.
- We must guard our hearts (see Proverbs 4:23) by maintaining a close personal walk with the Lord, and keeping our spirits tuned and responsive to the checks of His Spirit.
- We must exercise good judgment in staying away from potentially compromising situations, observing careful boundaries in regard to those of the opposite gender. Paul told the Ephesians that there should not be even a hint of sexual impropriety in the church (see Ephesians 5:3). This means avoiding being alone with a person of the opposite gender behind closed doors.
- We must never engage in any form of sexually-oriented or suggestive speech or behavior, including inappropriate humor.
- We must guard our minds, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5).
- We must put appropriate safeguards in place. This may include putting filters on our computers to preclude even inadvertent glimpses of indecent material. The principle of refusing to look (view or read) at what is impure is clearly taught in Scripture.

The Board of Trustees, in conjunction with the Superintendent General, has the spiritual authority and responsibility to determine if a minister has behaved in an inappropriate manner, and to designate any resultant consequences.

The conduct of a minister's spouse may impact a minister's ability to serve. In those cases, the district superintendent and/or the Superintendent General will evaluate the following areas and determine whether it is suitable for that one to continue in the ministry.

- *In case of separation or divorce, did he do everything in his power to restore the marriage, resisting the separation or divorce?* He clearly should not have been the one to suggest or implement divorce. (See Matthew 5:32.)
- *Has he been blameless in his treatment of his spouse, to the best of his ability?* Has his behavior qualified as a good, spiritual example to the flock? Generally there will be some need for improvement on both sides. However, there may be times when one party in a marriage backslides in spite of a spouse who has done his or her best.
- *What attitude is evidenced toward the erring spouse?* No matter what the error, a Christian should have a heart of love, kindness, forgiveness, and lack of bitterness toward the departed spouse. Hurt is understandable. Emotions are understandable. However, the godly attributes listed above cannot be set aside. If these are not clearly present, the minister is disqualified on that basis, not because of the marriage problem itself.

- *How would his spouse, children, and close associates ascribe culpability? How is his credibility?* Those close to the situation will have a sense of whether he is partly at fault. To protect the integrity of the ministry and the Gospel, a minister should never be preaching something he is not living.
- *Is he honest and open about the situation?* There should be no sense that he is avoiding taking responsibility, rationalizing unrighteous behavior, placing blame, or making excuses.
- *Is he willing to leave it to the pastor or district superintendent to decide how or if he should function in the ministerial role?* Humility and a desire to do whatever is best for the good of the Gospel is of paramount importance and a good indicator of usability.
- *Does he clearly understand that he is limited in his usability in the Gospel as long as the marriage issue is unresolved?* He should realize his effectiveness in preaching on topics such as marriage, love, communication, conflict resolution, and a variety of other topics will be impacted when his own marriage is in distress.
- *Has he done what he can to seek reconciliation and restoration?* He should be open to God and his district superintendent or the Superintendent General's guidance regarding what steps he could and should be taking, and be completely willing to take those steps.

Of course, whether or not the marriage relationship is ever restored, no license is ever given in Scripture for remarriage. An individual who is in a non-Biblical marriage is not qualified to be a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

At times, one who has participated in the ministry is guilty of misconduct. The question may be raised how the Apostolic Faith organization would respond to an instance where impropriety or sexual misconduct occurred in the life of a minister.

When a minister has been found to have been reckless, compromised his integrity, or been guilty of sexual misconduct, it certainly is possible for that one to be forgiven by God and by those in the church, but that does not mean he or she can be restored to the former leadership role. We must maintain the credibility of our organization.

One senior pastor expressed this thought on the subject:

"If there is no integrity in leadership, . . . we have compromised the very purpose of our calling. The church has a basic task and that is to hold up the realities of the Gospel. I would expect anyone entering the ministry to be warned of the seriousness of any moral lapse, and the consequences that would follow.

"At the heart of Christianity lies the cross of Christ with its divine paradox. The power of Christianity appears in its antipathy toward (never in its agreement with) the ways of fallen man. The cross stands in bold opposition to the natural man. Its philosophy runs contrary to the processes of the unregenerate mind. Thus, Paul could bluntly say that the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness. To try to find a common ground between the message of the cross and man's fallen reason is to try the impossible, and if persisted in, must result in an impaired reason, a meaningless cross, and a powerless Christianity."

Restoration to God is certainly possible through genuine repentance (see Isaiah 55:7). When it occurs, there is a clean slate in the eyes of God; sin is forgiven. However, there are consequences for broken trust, and in the Apostolic Faith Church, that means not being restored to the ministry. Evidence that an individual is accepting responsibility for their failure is that they recognize those necessary consequences.

The mentality that God's grace eliminates consequences for misconduct does not serve the offender or anyone else well. It is better to understand that God's grace is what enables one to accept responsibility and endure in a humble manner the consequences of having failed.

We cannot be afraid of having a standard consistent with the holiness work that we are. Our approach in addressing issues of failure need not be viewed as punitive. It would more accurately be described as protective: protective of the individual who fell short, and protective of the integrity of the work and the fact that we stand for holy living.

If there is an individual in the church where you currently pastor who has been around a long time but has never participated in the work, it would be wise to learn the reason why rather than suddenly asking them to participate. There may be a failure in the past that has disqualified them from participation.

Accountability to God

The Bible is clear about what God expects from those of us who preach His Word. Since authority to do the work of God comes from God himself, we are accountable to Him for how we fulfill our calling.

The commission to proclaim the Gospel is a sacred trust. In 1 Thessalonians 2:4, Paul stated, "As we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts." Since we were "allowed of God" to fill this role, we must strive to please Him, not people. That concept is reiterated in Galatians 1:10. The Apostle's accusers had charged him with adjusting his message so that it would gain the favor of his hearers. Paul responded by asking the rhetorical question, "Do I seek to please men?" and then emphatically answering with a firm no! He recognized that if he allowed himself to be influenced by the opinions of people, he could no longer be the servant of Christ, and he knew his responsibility was to God.

The office of a minister is not simply a profession. The serious nature of our commission to preach is reflected in Paul's charge to Timothy, recorded in 2 Timothy 4. The veteran servant of God began this part of his final epistle with the words, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:1-2). The word "charge" has the sense of a legal declaration. Earlier in the epistle, Paul had explained in great detail the responsibility which rests upon a Christian minister. Here, he indicates that in the discharge of his obligation, the younger minister is accountable to "God, and the Lord Jesus Christ." This accountability is also referenced in instructions given to first century Jewish Christians, who were told, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account . . . " (Hebrews 13:17).

The words used in Scripture to describe leadership roles in the work of the Lord offer insight into the nature of our call and obligation before God.

Watchmen: The first three chapters of the Book of Ezekiel focus on God's call to the prophet. In Ezekiel 3:16-27, God likened the awesome responsibility that had been given to Ezekiel to that of a watchman. In those days, cities had walls around them as protection from invading armies; sentries, or watchmen, were positioned on the walls to warn the inhabitants of an approaching army. This assignment involved serious responsibility and accountability. How could a city defend itself if it was not warned that an army was coming?

God told Ezekiel that he was to be a spiritual watchman—he was to warn individuals of the urgent necessity to turn from iniquity to righteousness. He admonished the prophet, "When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand" (Ezekiel 3:18). Just as God made Ezekiel "a watchman unto the house of Israel" (Ezekiel 3:17), He has called us as ministers to be watchmen. We are to be vitally concerned about the spiritual and eternal welfare of the people. And like the prophet Ezekiel, we will give an account to God for our faithfulness in fulfilling our assigned role.

If we faithfully proclaim God's Word, but those who hear us choose to reject the message, God will not hold us accountable. If we warn the wicked to turn from their wicked ways, we will have delivered our souls whether or not they respond positively. When the Word of God is preached and taught in truth and purity, the responsibility shifts to those who hear it.

Overseers: When the Apostle Paul met for the last time with the elders of the church at Ephesus, he exhorted them, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). The word *overseer* is from the Greek word *episkopos*, or "one who watches over."[1] Christ, the Lord of the church,

has invested His authority in us as His under-shepherds, but our responsibility is to care for and feed the church of God, which He "purchased with his own blood."

Ministers: In 1 Corinthians 4:1, the Apostle Paul states, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." The Greek word translated *minister* (*hyperetas*) means "servant," or literally, "under-rower." The word referred to a Roman slave whose work was that of an oarsman. The lowest deck of a Roman war galley was made of a single row of benches on each side of the ship, where the rowers sat. On a small wooden deck above them, so that all the rowers could see him, was the captain of the ship. If he wanted the ship to go forward, he would give them a signal to row; if he wanted them to stop, they had to stop instantly. Their whole business was to obey the master's orders. Like the "under-rowers" of Paul's time, as ministers we are to pay close attention to the orders of our Captain and execute them immediately and without question.

Stewards: In the same verse, Paul refers to preachers of the Gospel as being "stewards of the mysteries of God" and continues the thought in the next verse by stating, "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:1-2). A "steward" (*oikonomos)* was literally a house-manager—usually a trusted and efficient slave who had been put in charge of the household and given responsibility for the master's property and interests. Like the word *minister*, the term emphasizes subordination to the master. However, in the word *steward*, there is particular emphasis on the aspect of accountability. The steward was required to render an account for the manner in which he carried out his master's orders. Although he had been given authority over the house helpers and staff, he was under obligation to carry out the wishes of the owner.

As ministers of Christ, we are stewards—we have been entrusted with something precious. Paul told Timothy, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust" (1 Timothy 6:20). In other words, Timothy was to guard the deposit that had been entrusted to him. In Ephesians 3:8, Paul said that unto him, who was less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, "that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." What wealth beyond description is ours to proclaim—the matchless love and grace of God!

We have been granted an unspeakable treasure in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But with our commission to be watchmen, overseers, ministers, and stewards comes great responsibility. We are accountable before God as to how we discharge our responsibility.

[1] The word *episkopos* is translated elsewhere in the New Testament as *bishop*. See Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7; and 1 Peter 2:25.

Counsel to Ministers

As ministers of the Apostolic Faith organization, we are challenged by over a century of sound Biblical teaching and instruction, as well as practices that are rooted in the holiness teachings that led to the Latter Rain outpouring in 1906. Our mandate from God is to remain true to those teachings.

Ministerial Credentials and Ordination

The Bible makes it clear that appointments to the ministry should be done with care and deliberation by those in authority in the church, for no office in the work of God is to be held by a novice.[1] Eligibility for service in a ministerial role is based on Scriptural precedent. A study of the call and commission of the Apostle Paul reveals that he was called by God the Father,[2] commissioned by God the Son,[3] and empowered and led by God the Holy Spirit.[4] In addition, his ministry was accepted by the other Apostles and leaders who recognized and affirmed the call of God upon his life.[5] Based on this and other Biblical passages which establish requirements for those in the ministry, the Apostolic Faith organization appoints to the ministry only individuals of proven integrity, who have shown by character, faithfulness, and example that they are spiritually qualified.[6]

Credentials: Ministerial credentials are made available by the Apostolic Faith organization to individuals who have been called by God to our ministry (see Ephesians 4:11), and appointed to that office by those vested with authority in the church. For legal and official purposes, our organization issues various types of ministerial certifications, based upon the particular needs or governmental requirements in each location.[7] The absence of formally-issued credentials or certification is not an indicator that a person's call is not of God, or that the individual is not a true representative of this organization. Our greatest emphasis is on the spiritual qualifications.

All ministerial licenses are issued by the headquarters church in Portland, Oregon.[8] Credentials can be revoked at any time if the minister fails to keep his life, teaching, and conduct in harmony with the doctrines of the Word of God and the requirements of the organization. If a minister's license or credentials are revoked, it is the responsibility of that one to return the license or credentials.

Ordination: Ordination is the process by which a minister, in accordance with the leading of the Holy Spirit, is consecrated and authorized by the leadership of the church for a pastoral or other designated role. In the Apostolic Faith organization, we view ordination as being both spiritual and functional.

In the spiritual sense, ordination is a public acknowledgement of God's prior call, unction, and commission upon an individual, and is a time when the church leaders and those who witness the ceremony invoke the blessing of God upon the one assuming this role. In the functional sense, ordination indicates that legal authority has been vested in the individual to perform certain civil duties as a representative of the organization, such as presiding at weddings.[9]

Ordained ministers may serve as pastors of particular congregations or they may be given other assignments. Whatever their specific role, they are called to provide Spirit-filled leadership in the church. They are to commit themselves to equipping the whole body of believers to engage in proper worship, evangelistic action, and Christian nurture and fellowship. Biblically and historically, those who have been ordained are set apart for the study and proclamation of the Word of God, intercessory prayer, the winning of souls, the administration of the sacred emblems at the Lord's Supper, and the defense of the Gospel.

The ordination ceremony itself often takes place during a regular church service, as the emphasis is upon the spiritual quality of the event as opposed to a formal ritual. The ordination is conducted by the laying on of hands by other members of the ministry and/or elders, in accordance with examples provided in Scripture.[10] For instance, the Levites were set aside for service in the Tabernacle and the Temple by the laying on of hands,[11] and Joshua was ordained by the laying on of hands before the congregation and the high priest for his role as successor to Moses.[12] In the New Testament, the disciples who were appointed for special service in the Lord's vineyard were commissioned for their responsibilities by the laying on of hands.[13] As the ministry prays together for divine anointing upon the individual being ordained, those who are present join in prayer that God's blessing will rest upon the minister's life and service.

[1] See 1 Timothy 3:6 (in connection with verse 1), 10; 5:22.

[2] Galatians 1:15

[3] Acts 26:15-16

[4] Acts 9:17; 13:2

[5] Acts 9:27-30; 11:25-26; 13:2-3; 2 Peter 3:15-16

[6] See the topics *The Call to Preach* and *Spiritual Qualifications* in this manual for more on this subject.

[7] Generally, printed licenses or certification is only provided when such is necessary for a minister in order to conduct the business and legal affairs of the church.

[8] Currently, ministers in the United States are ordained for a five-year period. Credentials must be renewed after that time. Internationally, ministers should check with their District Superintendent or Regional Director regarding how long ministerial credentials are valid before renewal is required.

[9] Pastors should check on state and county laws regarding officiating at weddings. See the section of this manual titled *General Instructions for Marriage Ceremonies* for more information on this topic.

[10] See 1 Timothy 4:14 and 2 Timothy 1:6. Authority and power for ministry are conferred through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, not through those who perform the ordination ceremony. No particular man or group of individuals is essential to the ordination process; it can be done by any minister or ministers who have been granted permission by the leadership of the Apostolic Faith organization to do so.

[11] Numbers 8:10-11

[12] Numbers 27:18-23

[13] Acts 6:6

Women Preachers

In light of the Biblical role of women in the church, the Apostolic Faith organization makes no distinction between men and women in the work of the ministry. Godly women who give evidence of the call of God upon their lives, and who qualify spiritually, are accorded equal rights and privileges as men to labor in the ministry.

Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, is described by Scripture as a prophetess.[1] The office of prophet in Old Testament times included all that pertains to the office of a minister in this Christian dispensation, and more also, for the prophet was not only a preacher, teacher, and evangelist, but he also foretold the events of the future, under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Deborah was a prophetess, and, in addition, judged Israel.[2] Huldah is also mentioned as a prophetess.[3]

The New Testament also offers numerous examples of women who had positions of leadership in the church. Anna was a prophetess in the beginning of New Testament times who "departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day" (Luke 2:37). Philip, the evangelist, had four daughters who were ministers.[4] And there were women present when the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the 120 assembled in the Upper Room—an outpouring given for the express purpose that those who received it would be witnesses for God in every place where God would send them.[5] The Apostle Peter quoted the prophecy of Joel, stating, "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy," and, "On my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17-18).

Paul the Apostle states the fundamental truth of the impartiality of God, observing, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). He took no exception to the ministry of Priscilla, who was associated with her husband, Aquila, in the work of the ministry, and referred to her as one of his helpers (Romans 16:3).

God is no respecter of persons, and He makes no distinction between men and women—His "gifts and callings" are bestowed upon both with regards to serving in a ministerial capacity in the work of the Lord.

[1] Exodus 15:20-21

[2] Judges 4:4-5

[3] 2 Kings 22:14

[4] Acts 21:9

[5] Acts 1:8,14

Counsel to Ministers

Some will debate whether women should serve in a ministerial or pastoral capacity in the church, pointing to Scriptures such as 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12 to support their position.

In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul was admonishing the Corinthians against disorder and confusion in their worship (see verse 33). Paul's instruction in verse 34, that women were to keep silent in the churches, did not mean

that women should never speak in worship services. The fact that women did pray and prophesy in public worship is made clear in 1 Corinthians 11:5. Seemingly, however, some of the women who had become Christians in Corinth thought their Christian freedom gave them the right to question the men during a worship service. Obviously, this would cause division and disorder—the very situations Paul was cautioning the church to avoid. Possibly the questions were inappropriate for the church setting. Paul's words were meant to promote unity, not to be a declaration about the role of women in the church.

In 1 Timothy 2, the word "silence" in verse 11 is the same word that is translated as "peaceable" in verse 2. Paul was not implying that women were not to speak in the church, as he acknowledged and greeted women who were involved in church affairs numerous times in the Books of Acts and Romans. (See Acts 9:36; 16:14; 17:4,12; 18:1-3; Romans 16:1.) In the Jewish culture of that day, women were not permitted to study, so Paul's instruction that women were to learn was actually presenting them with a new opportunity. However, their participation was to be done in a spirit of "subjection" (which means "to rank under"). They were not to create confusion in a church service by interrupting. Nor were they to teach, because as yet they did not have enough knowledge or experience to do so.

In verses 13 and 14, Paul pointed to the precedent for order and chain-of-command that God established within the household. He referred to the order in which Adam and Eve were created. Just as Eve was first led astray, some of the women in Ephesus were following false teachers. Paul wanted Timothy to rectify this situation.

Ministerial Competence

Bible Study and Preparation

As ministers, we spend time in the Word of God for our own spiritual development and nourishment.[1] However, we must also study generally to provide ourselves with a comprehensive knowledge of the Word of God. While we read the Bible to get blessed, we must also read the Bible to get background; while we search its pages for spiritual food, we must also search its pages for spiritual foundations.

Occasions will arise when we will need to preach without adequate time for in-depth preparation. For success in those times, we must be able to draw from a reserve of Bible knowledge that is based on a disciplined and thoughtful study of Scripture. Notice Moses' admonition in Psalm 90:12, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." We need to organize our lives so that we make time for the regular study of God's Word!

Paul admonished Timothy, "Study [give diligence] to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).[2] If we are to correctly interpret and expound God's Word to those who listen to our messages, we must be diligent in ongoing Bible study and preparation. In 2 Timothy 3:17, Paul reiterated that application to understanding the Word of God is vital, "that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." Whatever other qualifications or attributes we may possess, the preeminent one must be that we are conscientious students of Scripture.

The Book of Isaiah tells us that in order to understand doctrine, we must study the Scriptures line upon line and precept upon precept.[3] In some fields of study, we can read a book on the topic once or twice, and gather what we need to know from it. We can put that book on the shelf and move on to something else. However, that is never true of the Bible. We can read it over and over again, and still absorb truths and insights that we have never seen before.

As ministers, our desire should be to equip our hearers to withstand those who reject and compromise the Word of God. To do that effectively, we must be well-versed in the structure, content, and central message of God's Word. In order to successfully teach them "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20) we must be knowledgeable "all things." We must show ourselves "apt to teach" (1 Timothy 3:2) by mastering the subject ourselves. In order to lead those who hear us to an "acknowledging of the truth" (2 Timothy 2:25) we must have that truth engraved deeply in our own minds and hearts. Jesus said to the Sadducees in Matthew 22:29 "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God." We want to be certain that we do not fall under the same condemnation!

It will be profitable to make a thorough study of the great themes of the Bible. These give us a background that is invaluable when we are preaching on any text or subject. Some important themes include: the Holy Trinity, with a complete study of each of all three Members; God's plan of salvation; the atoning Blood; the Old Testament types of Christ; the Law and the Gospel; the Kingdom of God; Messianic promises and prophecies; end time events and God's plan for the future; and the activities and methods of the Apostles. To thoroughly study all these themes will take effort and time, but will prove to be beneficial to our preaching.

It will also be helpful to invest time in a textual study of each of the books of the Bible, beginning with the Gospels and the epistles. This type of study should begin with a consideration of where the book fits historically, the author and the circumstances in which the book was written, to whom the book was written and why, and the events that were taking place in society at that time.

As ministers, we should be familiar with these basic principles of Bible interpretation.

Know what the words mean. Truth is embodied in words, so if we do not understand the words, the truth may be obscured. Many good Bible dictionaries are available, both in print and online.

Be alert to figures of speech. While the Bible communicates literal and historical facts, it does at times use parables, allegories, symbols, poetry, metaphors, and other figures of speech and literary techniques to reveal God's truth. If a literal interpretation of a passage appears to be in conflict with a known fact or another Scripture, a figure of speech is likely being employed.

Study the immediate context grammatically. Look at the words and how they relate to each other (syntax, singular vs. plural, etc.). It is important that we pay attention to the rules of language and interpret Scripture accordingly.

Explore cultural customs for added insight. Biblical text is best understood when we are familiar with the customs, culture, and historical context of the passage.

Interpret Scripture by Scripture. Individual verses or portions of Scripture must always be in harmony with the Word of God as a whole. We cannot base our conclusions on personal assumptions and preconceived notions, for "no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Peter 1:20).

During the time of the Apostles, the Bereans were commended because they searched the Scriptures "daily" to determine if what they had heard from Paul and Silas was true. This careful examination proved to themselves that the message was, in fact, of God.[4] We, like the Bereans, must diligently and systematically search the Scriptures in order to discern true doctrine from false.

One author who wrote on the subject of the minister's need for a thorough mastery of the Bible put it this way, "Every true preacher must be an earnest Bible student. He must spare no pains and neglect no method to master and grasp the Book. He must know what it is; he must know what it is not. He must learn what it contains; he must learn what it necessarily does not contain."[5]

The call of God to the ministry of the Word is a gift; we did not ask for it. Paul said to Timothy "Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee" (2 Timothy 1:6). The gift that has been given us should be a flame of fire, a burning heat, a driving energy. As ministers, our job is to stir up this gift and develop it, and one way we do this is to discipline ourselves to deep and thorough study of God's Word.

[1] See the section titled *Personal Growth and Development* for more on this aspect of ministerial study.

[2] The word translated *study* in this passage does not refer specifically to scholarly research of the Bible, important as that is in the equipping of a minister. It refers more broadly to an attitude of earnest endeavor in all tasks related to success in the ministry that the workman might meet with God's approval.

[3] Isaiah 28:9-10

[4] See Acts 17:11.

[5] Horton, cited on page 115 by R. W. Dale, *Nine Lectures on Preaching* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1890)

Counsel for Ministers

If we are among those responsible for the training of younger ministers, we must do our best to encourage them to improve themselves and their knowledge of the Word by coaching them patiently. If they stumble in their understanding of Scripture, their delivery could use polishing, or poor judgment is shown

in verbiage or choice of illustration, the pastor may feel it appropriate to make constructive suggestions. Any needed correction should be offered in a gentle and patient manner. Remember, God can use people in His harvest field even while they are growing and learning. We cannot expect a twenty-five-year-old minister to have the wisdom of a seventy-five-year-old Gospel veteran! The school of experience will develop any young worker who is eager to learn and is dedicated to the Gospel.

As noted in the section of this manual titled *The Inspiration and Infallibility of Scripture*, we rely upon the King James Version of the Bible for use in our services and as our primary source for study. For those whose native language is not English, we recommend that you attempt to find a version in your own language that is a word-for-word translation of the original languages, and one that was translated by individuals with an experiential knowledge of salvation.

We cannot assume that all commentaries, study helps, and even Bible dictionaries are doctrinally sound. We should be alert to the fact that most of these resources are based upon a theological background and persuasion that is different from ours. At times, indicators of these doctrinal differences may be very subtle in nature. It is preferable to obtain study helps that offer a holiness perspective whenever possible.

Time Management

All of us have a desire to effectively serve God; this is the motive in the heart of every true minister of the Gospel. To give our lives as living sacrifices for Him is our highest goal. In the ministry, we have found a place and opportunity to serve the Lord, not on a basis of a day's work, but on the basis of life-service.

In order to meet the responsibilities of our role, and the many (and often unexpected) demands upon our daily schedules, it will be important that we effectively manage our time. Paul the Apostle admonished, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:15-17). The word *redeeming* in this passage does not imply paying a particular price, but rather, "making the most of." Our time is precious and God-given, so we need to find a way to use it wisely.

Some key principles of effective time management will help us accomplish that goal.

*Prioritize***.** In Ecclesiastes 3:1, Solomon pointed out, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Determine what is truly significant, and deal with what is important. While it is good to begin each day by evaluating what must be accomplished in the next twenty-four-hour period, you also may want to block in time every month to review progress on long-term goals, projects, and commitments.

Organize wisely. Make sure you have an effective system in place to manage mail, calendar, accounts, sermon material, and congregational data. Keep your files in order. Reducing clutter reduces stress!

Plan realistically. Break large goals into small segments, and factor in the entire work process. Do not plan to accomplish an unreasonable amount of work in a day or a week. Enthusiasm and optimism are wonderful qualities, but they do not add hours to your day!

Schedule carefully. Keep your calendar or date book close by. Avoid scheduling too tightly; you want to allow a margin in your schedule for unexpected challenges and opportunities, as God allows them to come your way. Be on time—it is a matter of common courtesy to respect other people's schedules.

*Delegate when possible***.** It is unwise for those in the ministry to try to personally handle every detail. Be realistic about what is best for you to handle, and engage other trusted individuals in the church to help carry the load. Learn when to say no and when to say yes. That is what Moses and the disciples did![1]

Write it down. Have a method of keeping notes that works for you. Reduce "mental clutter" by jotting down projects, thoughts, things that need to be done, and phone calls to make as they occur to you. Putting them on paper or noting them electronically helps clear your mind. At the end of the day or week, mark off what has been accomplished and enter the remaining items on a new list.

Be aware of time robbers. Make sure your electronic "helpers" do not take more time than they are worth. Don't let online activities absorb inappropriate chunks of your schedule. We only have twenty-four hours in a day, so make the most of them by eliminating wasted time or by giving up unnecessary activities.

Work efficiently. Try to minimize distractions. Avoid becoming a slave to your cell phone and email by setting aside intervals in your schedule to deal with them. Explore telecommuting. Make sure that the meetings you do commit to are really necessary and cannot be handled in another way, and then prepare for those meetings thoughtfully and carefully. Think in terms of productivity, not time spent.

Make time for renewal. We must regularly block in time for personal growth, family, and relaxation, just as we do other appointments. And finally, it is vital that we take steps to nourish and care for our own souls! We must never neglect Bible study and prayer in order to make room for other activities. Jesus himself made time to withdraw from the people and commune with His Father in Heaven.[2] We must do the same if we are to obtain and maintain the anointing of God upon our lives and ministry.

The time demands of ministry are unique, and the best management will not bring any of us perfect control of our time. The unexpected happens, especially when our lives are built around service to others. When emergencies arise, people need their pastor or minister. However, it is not God's purpose or intention for any of us to be overwhelmed by unexpected demands or by our regular duties. We must remember that He is always in control, and there is always enough time to do God's will.

As stewards of the grace of God, let us purpose to make the best use of time while we have time to use.

[1] See Exodus 18:13-26 and Acts 6:1-6.

[2] For example, see Mark 1:35.

Counsel for Ministers

It has been said that the minister's motto is "I serve." Jesus, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself the form of a servant (see Philippians 2:5-7). We have been instructed to "follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:21), so as ministers we must be willing to do whatever our hands find to do, no matter how humble the task or how unnoticed it may be by others.

However, as good stewards, we must also guard our time. It is possible for us to become so engaged in activities only remotely beneficial to the work of the Lord that our strength, energy, and inspiration are depleted. We do not want to become a doer of tasks to the extent that we lose our focus or diminish our effectiveness as a teacher of the incomparable Word of God. Where there is need, of course, work must be done, no matter how menial it is, but our schedules and responsibilities cannot be dictated by others.

Personal Growth and Development

The call to and practice of Christian ministry is a gift, not a right or privilege. God has given to us the "ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18), and with our call comes tremendous responsibility. A call to the ministry is a call to preparation. The changing patterns of our culture require constant updating of our personal knowledge, methods, and skills—and that necessitates an ongoing commitment to growth and development.

It must ever be in our minds that as "ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Corinthians 4:1), we will give an account of our stewardship. God holds a minister to the highest of religious, moral, and personal standards. Though our commitment to excellence flows out of love for Him, we must always be aware of the inescapable responsibility that comes with the charge we have been given.

Those who serve in the military make use of the most efficient weaponry and equipment available to them. Civil ambassadors apply themselves to understanding the country and culture in which they work. We are not military personnel or civil ambassadors—but we are soldiers of the Cross and ambassadors for Christ! Our efforts for the Kingdom of God are of eternal importance. We must equip ourselves with every possible qualification and diligently acquire knowledge of the harvest field, in order to serve most effectively at the post to which we have been assigned.

Paul admonished the young minister, Timothy, "Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Timothy 4:5). Similar counsel was sent to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it" (Colossians 4:17). To "make full proof" or "fulfill" one's ministry is to be faithful and committed to all of its requirements—including personal and educational growth. We must not be negligent in this matter.[1]

None of us enter the ministry proficient in every skill needed, so we should desire to improve in areas where we lack. The wise King Solomon pointed out, "If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength" (Ecclesiastes 10:10). Let's make sure our ax is sharp! As we discipline ourselves to improve our competency in the awesome task that is ours, God will bless our efforts.

While the Bible is our primary textbook, we should expand our understanding of other key subjects. It will be beneficial to study good spiritual literature—material that is dependable and in conformity with Scripture. This is necessary to broaden our thoughts and to help us "rightly divide" the Word. Sermons by fundamental preachers of past days, who knew the power of God and who were instrumental in bringing many to Christ, will offer insight on how they presented a given text. Biographies of missionaries and great Christians through the ages will inspire and motivate us, as well as provide us with a background in the development of religious thought and holiness traditions throughout the eras since the time of Christ.

We should also read about topics outside of the religious realm, for a minister must have an awareness of the contemporary world. One speaker on the topic of ministerial knowledge put it this way, "A minister ought to be the best informed man on the face of the earth. He ought to see everything, inquire about everything, and be interested in everything."[2]

Every serious minister will desire to build an adequate library, beginning with basic work tools—standard reference volumes such as dictionaries, books on word studies, concordances, commentaries, etc.

A mastery of language is of tremendous value to those in the ministry, so it will pay dividends if we learn to communicate with clarity and authority.[3] Our preaching will improve as we build a good vocabulary, master the principles of effective oral presentation, and strive to eliminate grammatical errors.[4] Skill in expressing

ourselves in writing will also prove to be of great benefit. If circumstances permit, it may be beneficial to attend seminars or enroll in continuing education classes in speech, writing, and/or grammar at a local college or university.

Administrative ability is also a requirement for ministers, especially for those who are called to serve as pastors. Sound financial skills are a must. We need to be able to assess, plan, evaluate, and facilitate efforts in the various departments and outreaches of our local congregation.[5]

A working familiarity with the internet and current technology is beneficial, and should be obtained if at all possible. Instant access to the latest updates from headquarters is available through the Ministers page on our website at www.apostolicfaith.org. While not every device, application, or software option will improve our productivity and efficiency, ministerial tasks related to obtaining and storing information, communication, record keeping, and organization can be greatly expedited through electronic means.

While a breadth of knowledge is based to some degree on experience which can only be acquired over time, we should always keep a "learner" mentality. If we continually and prayerfully seek insight into the complexities of human nature, striving to be keen, observant students of how people live, work, and struggle, we will be better able to minister to their concerns.

If we are to fulfill the Scriptural admonition to "be … an example of the believers" (1 Timothy 4:12), we should exemplify a willingness to improve ourselves. Honest evaluation of our own abilities will show each one of us areas where we could grow. As we strive for proficiency in these areas, we can be assured that God will honor each effort we make for the furtherance of His Kingdom.

[1] See 2 Chronicles 29:11.

[2] Beecher, cited by Paul Scherer, *For We Have This Treasure* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1944) p 171.

[3] One excellent resource on this topic is the material covered in *The Elements of Public Speaking* presentations, available on the Ministers page of our website.

[4] For a more extensive coverage of effective pulpit ministry, see the topics *Sermon Preparation* and *Sermon Delivery* in this manual.

[5] See the topics covered in the *Administrative Work of a Pastor* section for more specific information on this aspect of responsibility.

Devotions and Prayer Life

The most effective preaching is Spiritfilled preaching, and such messages must come from a Spirit-filled messenger. A successful ministry is much more than an ability to present the doctrines, teachings, and practices of the church correctly. Our statements may be accurate, logically presented, and theologically sound, but if we do not have the unction from God upon our words, our efforts will fall short, to the detriment of those who hear us. Our sermons must be born of the Holy Spirit and anointed by the Holy Spirit in order to move hearts toward God![1]

One way we receive this divine unction is through personal communion with God. Therefore, our time spent in prayer and meditation upon the Scriptures is all-important. Spiritual growth and vitality requires intentionality. Casual reading of the Word and incidental prayers are inadequate, and cannot be depended upon to provide what we need.

One lesson we must learn is that while service to others is part of our God-given responsibility, it is no substitute for focused prayer and time spent in God's Word. Our schedules may be full, but we must refill our vessels at the divine Fount, and this takes place through personal Bible study, meditation, and earnest prayer. Our service *to* God must be an outflowing of our being *with* God. He is more interested in what we are becoming than in what we are doing for Him.

Personal Bible study: The Bible presents many reasons why time spent in Bible study is vitally important for the Christian. Among them are:

- It helps us to mature as believers. (1 Corinthians 3:1-2 and Hebrews 5:12-14)
- It provides necessary spiritual nourishment. (Matthew 4:4)
- It keeps us from sin. (Psalm 119:11)
- It brings blessing into our lives. (Revelation 1:3)
- It teaches us God's ways. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- It offers guidance. (Psalm 119:105)

While these benefits accrue to all who spend time in the study of God's Word, they are especially vital for us as ministers because we have a God-given responsibility to "feed the flock of God" (1 Peter 5:2). We must avail ourselves of the spiritual nourishment and instruction in His Word in order to have something to give the flock.

Meditation: Closely tied to Bible study is the practice of Biblical meditation, which is the act of pondering or thinking deeply on Scripture.[2] In Joshua 1:8, God promised Joshua success as part of the fruit of his meditation on the Word, telling him that he was to "meditate therein day and night." The Psalmist observed that the man who delights in the law of the Lord and meditates in it "day and night" (Psalm 1:1-2) would be blessed.

Time and patience are important elements to effective meditation and examination of the Word. One Christian writer observed, "Meditation upon God's Word is fast becoming a lost art among many Christian people. This holy exercise of pondering the Word . . . to get its sweetness and nutritive virtue into the heart and life, takes time, which ill fits into the speed of our modern age. Today most Christians' devotions are too hurried, their lives too rushed."[3]

Prayer: The necessity of personal times of prayer was established by Christ himself; He often retreated to places of solitude to pray.[4] As followers of Jesus, we are to do no less. As ministers, we should pray alone. We should pray with other ministers. We should pray with the workers and saints in public prayer meetings whenever possible, and for as long as possible. We should pray as we work, as we travel, as we counsel—as we do all the work of the ministry. In other words, we should "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).[5]

If the people under our preaching are to mature as Christians, it can only be accomplished as we lead the way. The holiest individuals of Christian history were those who made regular study of God's Word and prayer an absolute priority. It was not that study and prayer were a method used to attain holiness; rather, a close walk with God was the result of those times of communion. That should be our goal also.

There is no scarcity of the springs of living water, if we are willing to dig for them. It is often hard work to do this—it will require discipline to persevere in meditation and prayer. Sermons that compel people to respond to God will cost the preacher a high price long before he or she stands before the people!

[1] See 1 Corinthians 2:11-13.

[2] It is important to differentiate between Biblical meditation and secular meditational practices. For example, a form of meditation in which the mind is emptied is dangerous and actually opens up an individual's mind for Satanic attack.

[3] Merrill F. Unger, *Pathways to Power*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1953, p. 41.

[4] See Mark 1:35; 6:46; Luke 5:16; 6:12; 22:41-42.

[5] See also Luke 18:1.

Familiarity with Church History and Doctrine

Ministers of the Gospel will benefit from a broad understanding of Christian history. The Bible instructs us not to forget the past, but to teach it to our sons and our sons' sons (see Deuteronomy 4:9).[1] A study of the key events, historical settings, and people during Old Testament times as well as from the time of the Early Church through the present will help us to better understand God's plan for the ages.

The history of the Christian church is an ongoing testimony to the faithfulness of God toward humanity. In the years that have elapsed since the Apostles' passing, God has been faithful to safeguard His sheep, constantly challenging and refining the Church to rise to the high calling of becoming a "pillar and ground of the truth" for each generation (1 Timothy 3:15). To ignore church history is to be deprived of the lessons to be learned, both positive and negative, from a study of God's working both in and through the church through the ages.

Since we are representatives of the Apostolic Faith Church, we particularly want to familiarize ourselves with the history and development of this work. Studying our organization's journey from a ramshackle wooden building on Azusa Street in Los Angeles to an international ministry that spans six continents will inspire us and give us the knowledge we need to explain our origins to those who are interested. The account of how God led the band of zealous believers who gathered with Florence Crawford in a mission hall in the city of Portland, Oregon, and the faithful saints of God who followed them, to shape a God-given message into a worldwide ministry can create hunger in hearts today![2]

The Bible makes clear that we must "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15), so it is also imperative for us to have a thorough understanding of Bible doctrines. We want to be able to clearly state that we trace our doctrinal beliefs—simple Bible truths expounded through the centuries by leading Christians—from the days of the Apostles, when the Early Church was founded. The teachings emphasized then and now are rooted in the second chapter of the Book of Acts. God still calls and saves penitent sinners, dramatically transforming their lives. New converts are still encouraged to consecrate their hearts to God in order to receive the instantaneous experience of entire sanctification and begin a walk of holiness. The Holy Ghost is still freely given to those who have been saved and subsequently sanctified, empowering them to witness with evangelistic zeal.

One unique aspect of our organization is the unity that we enjoy between those in our churches around the world, in spite of differences in race, culture, and background. This unity is tied, in a great measure, to our organization's consistent doctrine and policy. In 1 Timothy 4:16, the Apostle Paul cautioned Timothy, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." In another place, he admonished, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (2 Thessalonians 2:15). As ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we must have these Bible doctrines deeply engraved in our hearts and minds, that we may faithfully expound them to those who hear us.

Those of us in the Apostolic Faith organization have a wonderful treasure that has been preserved throughout our history. May we "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3) and determine to pass on that same faith to those who follow us.

[1] See also Job 8:8-10 and Psalm 78:2-8.

[2] An overview of this organization's history can be found in our history book, *The Apostolic Faith: History, Doctrine, and Purpose,* copyright 2005, The Apostolic Faith Mission of Portland, Oregon. The first thirteen Apostolic Faith papers, printed on Azusa Street in Los Angeles after the Latter Rain outpouring of the Holy Spirit in 1906, are also available on our website at www.apostolicfaith.org.

Ministerial Responsibilities

Sermon Preparation

A primary responsibility of a minister of the Gospel is to preach the Word of God. We are called and commissioned to present spiritual truth in a manner that will convince sinners and edify believers—and preparation for that vital task must begin long before we step behind the pulpit.

Preaching is spiritual work. The message we present is drawn from a spiritual Book. Paul advised the young minister, Timothy, "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" (1 Timothy 4:15). If we have a strong devotional life, giving ourselves consistently to study of the Scriptures and prayer, the sermons will come. Our personal connection with God will give us the fuel that we need when it is time to prepare for a specific message.

The art of preaching involves the careful selection and skillful blending of a multitude of elements. Since we are all unique in terms of our personal abilities, background, training, and experience, the method of preparation that works best for us individually may entail experimentation and will require development. The following review of principles of sermon preparation will be helpful. (Note that in your individual approach, these steps may occur somewhat simultaneously, or in a different order than listed.)

Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. There is nothing more important than prayer as we begin and go through the process of sermon preparation. God is aware of the needs of those who will listen to our sermons, and He must direct us to the appropriate message for any given service. Each sermon should originate in the fertile heart of the preacher, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Choose the text. Choose the plainest text you can, and keep it simple. It should be evident quickly where we are going with the text. It is best to avoid reading lengthy portions of Scripture; if we present the entire account at the outset of our sermon, we have forfeited our opportunity to relate the passage in our own words.

Review the passage thoroughly. We should study our text intensively, reading it prayerfully and meditatively several times. Some ministers find it helpful to record thoughts that come to mind at this point, word meanings to research, or issues and ideas to explore. The most effective communication comes from our personal interaction with the Word of God.

Study the context. We need to be completely familiar with the setting of the verse we have chosen as a text. This will keep us from suggesting a meaning or application that was not intended by the author. Commentaries, Bible dictionaries, or online research can offer the historical/cultural context of the passage, as well as information about the author, recipients, date, situation, culture, and geography. We should know the context and refer to it.

Determine the central message or thesis for the sermon. It may help to ask ourselves: What timeless principle is brought out by the text? Once we define the central message, we can begin to build upon it. Notice that there is a difference between choosing a subject (for example, "Sin") and developing a central message or thesis statement (for example, "Sin is destructive," or "Sin always brings consequences.")

Expand the central message with supporting material. Some ministers find it helpful to develop three or four sub-points that support their central message, noting these in a brief outline format. For example, in a topical sermon if our central message is "Sin is destructive," our sub-points might be: 1) It destroys bodies. 2) It destroys families. 3) It destroys souls. Additional Scriptures that amplify or support our sub-points can then be considered. [1]

Note appropriate illustrations. The illustrations and personal reflections we share should add understanding, insight, interest, and relevancy. We want to make sure these advance the direction of our message and add to the point they were chosen to support. A story for story's sake is not what preaching is about.

Make a contemporary application. It is important to apply our chosen text to everyday life. As ministers, we live in two worlds: the ancient Biblical world and our contemporary setting. We must connect these two in our sermons if our preaching is to be effective. It may help to ask ourselves: What would the Lord have me to accomplish with this sermon?

Plan an introduction and the altar call. Our opener should not only present the text, but it should gain the audience's attention and preview our main idea before we get very far into the sermon. Toward the end of our message, we should summarize the central point and provide a sense of closure. We want to ensure that our final remarks lead to an altar call, where we invite the audience to act upon what we have delivered to them. The entire service should have been building to this point!

Prepare a final outline. It may be helpful for us to make brief notes highlighting the central message and key supporting points. While we may at times wish to read a short quote or excerpt, our delivery will be most effective if our notes are highlights only and our delivery is extemporaneous, rather than read.

Perhaps the most important part of sermon preparation is keeping ever before us that our mission is to win souls for God. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14). We must realize that those who hear us will one day stand before God, and their eternal welfare may depend on their response after they have heard our message. May God help us to fulfill our calling to the very best of our ability!

[1] In addition to a topical sermon structure, which provides several independent points to support the thesis, there are other common ways to develop a text. These include the following:

- Inductive (make a generalization and support it with specific examples)
- Chronological (approach the topic via the past, present, and future, *or* steps one, two, and three)
- Pro/Con (present opposing positions on an issue)
- Problem/Solution (state a problem and give a solution)
- Compare/Contrast (Focus on similarities and differences between two or more concepts or individuals)

For more on sermon delivery, see the topic titled "Public Speaking" from the 2010 Ministers Training Session, *Equipped to Serve*. This can be found on the Ministers page of our website.

Counsel for Ministers

No doubt every minister has pondered: What is the secret of real influence in the pulpit? What is it that inspires a congregation? What moves a sermon from mundane to memorable, from passable to powerful? Following are some suggestions which we should keep in mind as we approach the sacred task of preparing a message to present to the people.

- Keep the standard of victorious living without sin before the people at all times. Preach Jesus! Dwell on the topic of holiness often. One of the renowned preachers of a former day has said that he was more successful in bringing sinners to Christ by preaching holiness and entire sanctification than by any other topic or subject. We should remember that our mission, as ministers of the Apostolic Faith organization, is to uphold the Latter Rain Gospel message with which we have been entrusted.
- While we know that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16), we are also aware that some passages are more obscure than others. Portions of Scripture that are unclear do not make good sermon topics. Nothing is gained when the congregation begins speculating about a line of reasoning that is vague or unsupportable by Scripture. The Gospel is clear and simple. What we need to know for our eternal welfare is apparent in the Word of God.
- If we are not the pastor, we should not use our sermons to address matters the pastor should deal with. The pastor may be privately dealing with the situation so it is not elevated to the point where the whole church knows the problem. Pray for him or her to have wisdom and direction from God as to when and how the matter should be approached.
- We should not attempt to preach beyond our experience. The sermon grows as the man grows. The man behind the sacred desk who has thirty years of experience in the ministry has earned the right to say some things that should not be said by a beginning minister. We should limit our topics to those we have earned the right to preach about by our experience and maturity. Our messages must be backed up by our lives!
- We must preach from inspiration rather than frustration, as frustrated preaching shows a lack of appreciation for the people in our audience. If we are frustrated about something, we must pray it through before we preach. And we should take care not to come across in a harsh or stern manner to our audience. They have no obligation to be there—and they might not be the next time if we leave them feeling battered and defeated!
- Care must be taken in how we preach on the Bible accounts of those who were physically and mentally impaired, so we do not unwittingly show disrespect to members of our audience who have impairments. Physical blindness is used in the Bible to illustrate the more serious condition of spiritual blindness or sin, but we do not want to equate a blind person to a sinner. Nor will anything be gained by focusing at length on how terrible it would be to suffer from that impairment. Many people with disabilities have learned to function very well in spite of their handicaps, and may feel offended if we characterize their limitation as some sort of horrible tragedy.
- We should keep our audience in mind. Jesus was a Master in using themes and word pictures that would directly relate to the lives of His hearers. Just as a farmer recognizes that certain crops will grow best in specific types of soil, we should be aware of the group to whom we will speak when we prayerfully choose our topics and illustrations.

Sermon Delivery

When it is time to step behind the pulpit and bring a message from the Word of God, we should do so with confidence in God and dependency upon Him. Our authority as ministers is not in the office we hold—it is in the Word that we preach. We have a message from God! What a wonderful responsibility and privilege has been given to us.

The Psalmist said, "O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise" (Psalm 51:15). When we have done our best to prepare our sermons, and we are leaning upon Him for unction and anointing upon our words, we can rest in the confidence that He will, indeed, open our lips. If we have properly prepared our own inner man, our words will ring true. And the message will prepare the hearts of the people for prayer at the altar call.

As we consider the topic of sermon delivery, it will be helpful to review some principles that should guide us as ministers of the Apostolic Faith organization.

Preach the Word. The word *sermon* has its origin in a Latin word which means "a stab or thrust." The purpose of a message from God's Word is to penetrate hearts with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. We are to preach what "Thus saith the Lord." When the sermon is over, we want our hearers to remember the words of God and not the method we used to present His words. Paul said, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:5). The focus should always be on Him, rather than on ourselves.

Open by reading the text. Our first words when we stand behind the pulpit are a moment of opportunity to focus the attention of the audience. If we begin with the text, we immediately draw their attention to the Word of God—and that is exactly where attention must be directed. The Bible should be our starting point, for beginning with God's Word gives a tone of sacredness to the coming discourse, and is the authority upon which we base our message.

There are infrequent exceptions: when we travel, it would be impolite not to greet the congregation who has gathered and express appreciation for the privilege we have to be there. However, on most occasions, the Scriptures are the right place to begin our messages.

Be evangelistic in tone, but appeal to all. Our sermons should be evangelistic in nature, because the key goal before us is to bring souls to God, while edifying and inspiring those who are Christians as well. Some preachers have an amazing ability to encourage everyone in the audience, no matter where they are in their spiritual walks—backsliders, sinners, the disinterested, the faithful saints of God, and seekers alike. Sinners feel a desire to pray, whether or not they get the courage to do so. Seekers respond by believing that God is going to meet with them. The saints of God are appreciative of the power of the Gospel. God's Spirit and anointing upon our messages is what makes that possible. We must do all we can to cultivate and develop this ability to encourage.

Convey spiritual passion. When we preach, we must put our heart into it. If we do not feel our message, the people will not feel it. The best and most well-organized sermon will have little impact if it is not delivered with sincerity and power. When a sermon really lives, the listening audience will want more of the same.

There is a danger of falling into perfunctory performance—the attitude that since it is Sunday again, we must get up and say something. There is peril in getting so familiar with the divine that it no longer thrills us! The writer of Romans said, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out" (Romans 11:33). That sense of awe and inspiration needs to sweep over us. People will feel it when we feel it! And the power and the spirit of the message may be remembered long after the words have been forgotten.

Spiritual energy is far more than enthusiasm, eloquence, or charisma. It is anointing! It is intensity of passion. It is having an earnest spirit. We must convey that! And the divine fire will only be fanned into flame when we are alone with God. That is where the passion in our messages comes from.

Make sure the audience sees Jesus. When we take a drink of water from a hose, we want to taste water, not rubber. That is how we want to be—simply a conduit for the transmission of God's message. The best delivery is the one that no one sees. Paul said, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency 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" (1 Corinthians 2:1-2). We do not want people to see us. We want people to see Jesus!

Be sincere. While genuine feeling is certainly part of effective preaching, we must always take care not to dramatize or feign emotion in any way. We must be absolutely sincere in all that we say or portray to our audiences. In the Tabernacle worship of the Old Testament, it was a capital offense to counterfeit the holy anointing oil used by the priests (see Exodus 30:32-33). It surely would be a serious offense against the pure, undefiled Holy Spirit of God to do anything that would simulate the anointing of the Holy Spirit on our work. There is no substitute for the genuine unction of the Holy Spirit.

Preach positively. As a rule, negative preaching produces negative results and positive preaching produces positive results. We should avoid negative references to other churches, taking care not to sound as if we are the only church preaching the truth. We want to preach a positive Gospel in a positive manner, remembering that we bring "good news." This does not mean that we refrain from condemning sin, corruption, and evil. However, continual denouncing of society or behaviors we see around us will be disheartening to our listeners. It has been aptly said that we do not always prove that we are right by proving others are wrong.

Know when to stop. Every message should have an objective, and when we reach that objective—the culmination of our sermon—we need to bring our message to a close. Length does not equal depth or impact: Paul preached the sermon on Mars Hill with just two hundred and sixty words. It is much better to close once we have reached the climax of our message than to try to extend it with "filler."

Close with an altar call. We need to make sure that in every meeting, people are invited to pray and give their hearts to the Lord. The purpose of preaching is to bring people to the altar, and if we neglect that, we have missed the most important aspect of the service. The sermon is not the end; it is the means to the end. The end is a changed heart at an altar of prayer.

The best time to terminate any sermon is when the "pull" of the Spirit is the strongest—when there is the greatest response on the part of the listeners. It is not necessary or important that the sermon fill a certain allotted time. It is better to quit too soon than to stop when it is too late!

Principles of Effective Speaking

While the Spirit of God moving in and through us is the most vital aspect of an effective sermon, good oral presentation skills cannot be neglected. We want our congregations to be moved by what we say and not be distracted or put off by how we say it. Applying some basic principles of effective public speaking to our sermon delivery will benefit us as ministers.

Be specific. Abstract comments are of little value, and generalities are weak and difficult to apply. Be concise! Many words do not make up for lack of content. Repeating the same phrase over and over again can quickly become distracting to the congregation. Most of us could take a printed copy of our sermons and edit them to present the same message more efficiently. Let's challenge ourselves to eliminate the unnecessary.

Be understandable. We should always speak in a manner that is easy to understand. Nothing is gained by utilizing a vocabulary that goes over the heads of the congregation. Our work is to expound the message of

God, not to complicate it.

Watch your word choice. We need to avoid words that will distract or amuse the audience. For example, instead of referring to Balaam's ass, we could refer to the prophet's animal as Balaam's mule, donkey, or even beast of burden. Nor do we want to diminish the dignity of the Gospel by some off-the-cuff remark, or trivialize our message by being too funny or too casual. The atmosphere generated by such comments ultimately dampens the effectiveness of the Spirit on the service. When preaching in another country or culture, we should choose simple, clear words to make our point, as words with multiple or obscure meanings could be misunderstood.

Pay attention to grammar and pronunciation. Grammatical errors and incorrect pronunciation will be a distraction to our audiences, especially if the error is repeated several times. Some Bible words are challenging, so it helps to refer to a dictionary and practice ahead of time any words, names, or places that are difficult. Be aware that pronunciation can be culturally determined; we must learn to pronounce words the way our audience expects us to pronounce them.

Speak slowly and distinctly. Our preaching should be done at a conversational pace, slow enough to be understood, but not laborious. Rapid speech can be confusing, especially for those who are hard of hearing. There should be enough pauses between points to allow our listeners to absorb the meaning. We should also take care to enunciate clearly rather than mumbling or running words together. Habitual "clipping" of words can be improved by the practice of reading aloud, slowly and deliberately.

Avoid verbal clutter. Our sermons will be much easier to listen to if we eliminate filler words, repeated phrases, or sounds like "uh," "um," and "you know." These obviously add nothing to our message and may actually obscure it. It is perfectly acceptable to pause between thoughts and sentences, and that is a far better speaking technique than filling the space with an unneeded sound.

Be conscious of your tone of voice. We should strive to make sure our tonal range is moderate, rather than excessively high or low. All of us possess a natural pitch range, and effective speakers learn to use their entire range while speaking, rather than talking in a monotone. In addition, an artificial tone to our voice, like contrived phraseology, will immediately be discernible to those who know us.

*Volume matters***.** If our voices are too soft and indistinct, our audience may grow tired of straining to catch our words, and allow their minds to wander. Speaking too loudly, or in a harsh tone, is grating and offensive. Our goal should be to speak in a manner that does not call attention to our voice itself—we should be loud enough to be heard but without noticeable strain. If a public address system is being used, we should be careful to stay within range of the microphone.

Nonverbal Elements of Public Speaking

Some of the nonverbal elements of public speaking are personal appearance, posture, body movement, hand gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact. It will be helpful to consider these in relation to effective sermon delivery also.

Appearance: Our personal appearance should be a credit to the Gospel message we proclaim. We should dress appropriately for the House of the Lord, and make sure that we are clean, neat, and well-groomed, as representatives of God himself.

Posture: Our posture conveys something to the audience. If we hunch over or lean on the pulpit, our listeners might assume we are tired, unwell, or lacking in confidence. Conversely, if we puff out our chest or have an arrogant tilt to our chin, they may assume we are excessively confident or even aggressive.

Movement and gestures: Our movements at the pulpit are best when they simply and unobtrusively reinforce our vocal delivery. It is best to be relaxed, natural, and use variety. We should avoid making one particular gesture over and over again. Our gestures and mannerisms should be subordinate to the message, and not a distraction.

Facial expression: Those in our audience will instinctively "read" our emotional state by our facial expression, so we want to make sure the look on our face matches the content and tone of our sermons. A fixed smile would be incongruous if we are warning our audience of the dangers of neglecting salvation. In the same way, a sober or stern expression would contradict a message about the joys that await us in Heaven.

Eye contact. Some speech instructors suggest that eye contact is the most important nonverbal element of an effective verbal presentation. Our audiences will more easily feel our sincerity if we make eye contact with them, so we should scan the audience as we speak, taking care to address those on each side of the pulpit as well as those in front of us.

Perhaps one of the greatest elements of successful pulpit ministry is having a vision of those who are spiritually needy—people who have broken hearts, troubled lives, and shattered dreams. There will be many of them in our congregations. They come to find answers for deep needs. They come to hear the Word of God. Our job is to be preachers of the Gospel!

Think of the message the angel gave the shepherds: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11). The Gospel is good news! The Lord said that He would comfort all who mourn, and give them "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" (Isaiah 61:3). That is what we want to proclaim. When we stand behind the pulpit, we want gracious words to proceed from our lips. Millions of people have received the Gospel and have found it the answer to their souls' deepest needs. If the message of Christ is presented with the unction and anointing of the Spirit of God, it will appeal to peoples' hearts.

Counsel for Ministers

It is normal to experience some degree of public speaking anxiety, especially when we are new to the ministry. This may cause us to shake, blush, have our minds go blank, etc. However, over time the anxiety will most likely decrease, at least in part. The fact is that we generally do not look as nervous as we feel. Remember that our goal when we preach the Word of God is not primarily to please people, but rather to persuade people. We must not be lacking in courage!

We should be careful not to "major on the minors"—to regularly include the same relatively unimportant issue in our sermons. Our audiences certainly will tune us out if we always end up at the same spot whether we start in Genesis or Revelation.

The pulpit is not the appropriate place to address matters that should be handled in private. And while illustrations may be drawn from our past experiences in dealing with people, we should avoid referring to the failures of individuals in such a way that others will know of whom we are speaking.

While we strive to speak in a contemporary manner that will appeal to our listeners, the use of slang is problematic. If we are beyond our "youthful" years, speaking in the vernacular of a younger generation could come across as contrived. And since contemporary expressions change so rapidly, employing them in our messages may only accentuate the fact that we are behind the times.

We want to be open to any instruction or training which will help us do a better job in our presentation of the Gospel. Some ministers have found it helpful to engage the assistance of a qualified family member or friend to identify grammatical errors, poor habits of speech, or mannerisms that could distract from our preaching.

As ministers, we will receive both positive and negative evaluations of our preaching. We must do our best to learn from any grain of truth which may come through criticism without becoming derailed or discouraged. Charles Spurgeon once said that we can learn a lot more from our critics than we can from a thousand indiscriminate admirers! We should also humbly acknowledge any praise that may come by always giving the glory to the Lord. We must learn not to be too impacted by what people say from either perspective.

Platform Decorum

Decorum is defined as "appropriate social behavior; propriety in manners and conduct." As ministers, we should always behave with propriety, but proper decorum in the church setting is especially important because our conduct there reflects on the House of God itself. Paul wrote to Titus of the necessity of adorning "the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Titus 2:10). That instruction was directed to household servants, but how much more important it is for those who are servants in a ministerial capacity!

Perhaps the primary Biblical principle in the matter of decorum in the church setting is found in 1 Corinthians 14:40, "Let all things be done decently and in order." The following guidelines will help us do our best along this line.

- Conversations between ministers during the service, or between ministers and workers on the platform, should be kept to an absolute minimum.
- Restless movements are distracting, so fidgeting and changing position should be avoided as much as possible.
- When we kneel on the platform with our backs to the audience, we should sit back on our heels.
- Congregational prayer is a sacred time, as the one leading in prayer is approaching the Throne of Grace on behalf of those in attendance. We should focus on the prayer, and try not to use that time to perform other tasks like conversing or passing notes. These activities could be considered disrespectful.
- We should sit in a dignified manner, rather than slouching or leaning on an elbow. If gentlemen cross their legs, they should do so at the knees or ankles. It is not appropriate to cross their legs by putting one ankle on a knee or to sit with knees spaced widely apart. Ladies should cross their legs only at the ankles.
- Laughter during a service will occur occasionally, but when it does, it should be brief and appropriate. It is acceptable to acknowledge the humor of a comment or situation with a smile, but we should take care that the reverent atmosphere of the meeting is not disrupted.
- Avoid exchanging nods or personal recognition with anyone in the congregation during a service, as a well-intentioned smile of recognition from the platform may be misinterpreted by someone else who intercepts or observes it. Instead, we should greet visitors before or after the service.
- Finally, we should do our best to keep a pleasant look on our faces throughout the service. A furrowed brow of concentration could be interpreted as a scowl or displeasure regarding what is being said.

Leadership

Religious leadership begins with a response to a divine call. If we are to be effective leaders, we must be followers first. Jesus' initial words to the fishermen who would become His disciples and the future leaders of His church were, "Follow me" (Matthew 4:19). Just prior to His ascension, He once again pointed out the importance of following, telling His disciples, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me" (John 21:22).

In our culture, pastors and ministers receive multiple offers of leadership books, leadership seminars, and leadership materials. Material promoting how to be better followers is not so easily obtainable. However, the Bible places much more emphasis on our need to be followers—first of God and then of the principles of the Gospel that have been given to us.[1]

The Biblical model of leadership differs from the leadership model presented by business or government establishments. Abraham, Moses, David, Nehemiah, the prophets, Paul, and Jesus are among the Biblical leaders from whom we can draw inspiration. Each of them offers vital lessons about the nature of effective Christian leadership.

Abraham

Abraham's role as a leader began with an act of faith. Called by God to "go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, [he] obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.…For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:8,10). Abraham's life reveals the importance of having a vision, and responding in faith and obedience to God even when we do not fully understand. Because of his willingness to respond to God's call, he became the "father of many nations" (Genesis 17:5). As a leader of his growing nomadic clan, he modeled faith, justice, compassion, humility, obedience, courage, and unselfishness—all characteristics of a good leader. Daring to be different from the pagan society that surrounded him, his life has impacted a huge segment of the world's population through the centuries since he walked on this earth.

Moses

Moses, who led approximately three million Israelites across an arid desert to the Promised Land, is a key example of leadership in Scripture. One lesson we learn through a study of the leadership of Moses is that it is God who has called us to our mission. God called Moses to the task of liberation—he was charged to bring deliverance to the oppressed Children of Israel. As ministers today, we too have a task to accomplish for God. One part of our leadership role is to lead people through the darkness of a sin-filled culture while providing light to the lost who long for a better way of living.

Moses exemplified a necessary quality in a godly spiritual leader—that of meekness. Numbers 12:3 tells us, "The man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." In Numbers 16, we read of Korah's insurrection, and Dathan and Abiram who were emboldened not only to resist Moses, but to recruit two hundred other leaders to do the same. Perhaps those two hundred men looked at Moses and viewed him as a weak leader. However, Moses was the meekest man, not the weakest man. Meekness and weakness are not synonymous.

Moses was also an example of the teaching role of a leader—he gave the Children of Israel God's Ten Commandments, instructed them in the details of how to build the tabernacle in the wilderness, and taught them God's requirements for living as His chosen people. He evidenced a true leader's deep commitment to his people when he interceded with God to forgive Israel's sin of worshipping the golden calf, saying that if God would not forgive them, "blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book" (Exodus 32:32).

David

David is acclaimed by many historians as the most brilliant leader of ancient Israel. Courageous and strong in war, it was under his leadership that Israel achieved rest from its military enemies. David had many admirable leadership qualities: he was a military genius, an intelligent statesman, and an able administrator. However, perhaps one of the most critical lessons we learn from him is that leaders are susceptible to temptation. With power comes the potential to abuse power, and David's public success was greatly damaged and his private relationship with God was destroyed by his immoral decision. As ministers of the Gospel, we must be very aware that no matter what our role in the service of the Lord, we must never choose our own will and way instead of God's will and way. Though David repented of his sin (see 2 Samuel 11 and 12, and Psalm 51), there was a tragic impact on his family and the whole nation of Israel.

The prophets

Old Testament prophets offer us notable examples in various aspects of effective spiritual leadership. For instance, the account of Nehemiah as he led the people in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem teaches the necessity of identifying and responding to challenges, even when those challenges seem impossible. The reconstruction work accomplished by Nehemiah and those who labored with him can inspire us as we labor to rebuild broken individuals, damaged families, and the sin-devastated communities in which we live. Nehemiah's focus on his God-given vision and purpose, along with his confidence in God, personal involvement, watchfulness over the work, ability to delegate, and perseverance in the face of attempts to undermine progress, all portray attitudes we will need to model as we lead the flock of God.

Leadership is seen in the lives of prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, who took the insights given to them by God and faithfully voiced those insights to the people, warning them of judgment to come. They were examples of fearless obedience to God, persevering in spite of opposition, hostility, indifference, retaliation, and persecution. The Apostle James noted this, and admonished, "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience" (James 5:10). Through these dedicated men, we learn the necessity and value of courageously proclaiming the truth in whatever environment we labor.

Paul

In 1 Corinthians 4:9-13, the veteran minister Paul painted a picture of apostolic humility and endurance in times of trial. His words were not pious pretense; these were principles of Paul's ministry that were lived out in both his public ministry and private life. Paul told the Corinthians, "God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." He told them of the tribulations he had gone through for the sake of the Gospel, concluding "Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace." We may not be called upon to endure the situations Paul endured, but we will face challenges as we do the work of the ministry. We are called to lead others in patient endurance, by this setting an example of faithfulness and grace in the midst of tribulation.

Paul also offers us a New Testament example regarding the teaching aspect of leadership. The Apostle not only exhorted and instructed believers of the Early Church in face-to-face meetings, but through his letters to the various churches, he expounded the doctrines of Jesus Christ, clarified misconceptions related to doctrine, and disproved false teachers.

Jesus

Our Lord himself gave us the perfect pattern of spiritual leadership while He walked this earth. Though He was co-equal with God the Father, Jesus was humble and lived as an example to His followers, never exhibiting any form of pride, arrogance, or high-handedness. He instructed, "He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve" (Luke 22:26). Jesus led by serving, selflessly putting the needs and wishes of others ahead of His own needs.

Jesus demonstrated the necessity of a relationship with God through prayer, and of following the will of God the Father. He modeled dedication and commitment, and showed His disciples the power of faith (see Mark 11:22-24). Jesus exemplified self-discipline, integrity, and righteousness to the extent that His enemies were unable to find any sin or wrongdoing in His life—they could only point out where He violated their own traditions and interpretations. Ultimately, Jesus proved His absolute love for all of humanity when He gave His life for man's redemption.

As ministers of the Gospel, we must learn from Jesus. Leadership is not a position of superiority, but of servanthood. We must seek to have the same mind which Christ had—only then can we claim to be His followers and effective leaders of others.[2]

In summary, a good leader will . . .

- Be willing to be a follower first.
- Have a spiritual vision and purpose.
- Have an intimate connection with God and be obedient to His voice.
- Exemplify faith, justice, compassion, meekness, self-discipline, courage, and unselfishness.
- Maintain a positive attitude, even in the face of hard circumstances.
- Guard against the wiles of Satan.
- Possess the qualities of determination, steadfastness, endurance, and confidence in God.
- Be committed to inspiring, teaching, encouraging, and motivating others.
- Have the heart of a servant.

Finally, we must be examples to others if we are to be leaders in the Gospel work. We read in 2 Timothy 2:6, "The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits." This injunction covers every phase of our work in the service of God. The saints of God will follow us in the same manner that we lead. If we are steady, faithful, loyal, and happy, the people will be steady, faithful, loyal, and happy. Conversely, if we are restless, impulsive, and fretful, our congregation will mirror our behavior—they will be discontent and abrupt with one another. Why? They are following.

As ministers of the Gospel, we began by being good followers. That is why at some point we were asked to preach the Gospel. It had been observed that we followed what we were taught to do. We prayed at the altars, testified in the services, faithfully fulfilled our responsibilities in whatever capacity we were asked to serve in the church, and lived as good representatives of the Gospel. In short, we demonstrated that we had an ability to follow.

By the grace of God, we want to continue to be good followers of Christ and the Biblical leaders before us, that we may rightly and effectively lead the people of God in our day.

[1] Note Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 11:1-2. See also 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6 and 1 John 2:24.

[2] See Philippians 2:3-8

Connection with Headquarters

Since 1907, the Apostolic Faith Church has had its headquarters in Portland, Oregon, where the work is led by the Superintendent General.[1] In the Early Church, there was a connection between the church leaders in Jerusalem and established groups of believers outside of Jerusalem,[2] and we follow that model. A strong bond exists in our organization between the headquarters in Portland and the international community of Apostolic Faith congregations worldwide. One part of our role as pastors and ministers in the United States is to maintain and reinforce that bond by keeping in regular contact with the Portland headquarters. Many of the same principles apply to pastors in other countries and their connection with their regional headquarters.

As pastors, there are several specific aspects of our obligation in this regard.

Order and promote literature. As pastors and ministers, we want to be enthusiastic users and promoters of the literature resources made available by our organization. We should make sure that quantities of literature are ordered in a timely manner, and that supplies are available to visitors and to those in charge of the outreach ministries of our congregations. Keep in mind that unused literature is of no value to anyone and an expense to the work, so we should take care that we only order what our congregations can use.

Send monthly financial reports. Pastors in the United States are asked to submit a balance sheet and a statement of church income and expenses on a monthly basis, including pastor and parsonage expenses; outside of the United States, this information should go to the regional headquarters.[3] This report assists the headquarters operation in understanding the needs of each local body, and ensures accountability. In some areas, it is required for insurance purposes.

Contribute financially. Most of our domestic branch churches send headquarters ten percent of the tithes money that they receive.[4] These tithes and offerings help toward the cost of the publication work and other outreach efforts. God wonderfully provides for the spread of the Gospel but we, as people who have benefited greatly by the efforts of this organization, must not forget our responsibility to participate in the furtherance of the Gospel in this manner. Branch churches outside of the United States generally tithe to their district headquarters, to support camp meetings and other regional outreaches.

Participate in organizational events at headquarters. Taking part in the events that occur at the headquarters may require sacrifice on our part, especially when doing so requires traveling. However, for pastors in the United States, being present at the Portland special meetings, the Ministers' Meetings held annually, and especially at camp meeting itself is of benefit to us personally, and a major contributing factor to the unity we enjoy as a body of believers. As pastors, we want to be sure to inform those in our congregations of upcoming events at the Portland headquarters, and encourage their attendance. Pastors in other locations around the world should support events at their regional or district headquarters in the same manner. In turn, ministers who represent headquarters are routinely dispatched around the world to support branch churches.

Respond to requests in a timely manner. From time to time, the Superintendent General or members of the headquarters staff will request information, updates, or assistance with projects. We should respond to these requests within the designated time frame, and to the best of our abilities. Efficiency and accountability are part of a pastor's job, just as they are part of any secular position of employment.

Be an example in your support of headquarters. As ministers and pastors, it is vital that we do our best to encourage and promote the endeavors undertaken by our organization, and these often are implemented at the Portland headquarters. If we are positive and enthusiastic about what is going on there, our congregations will follow our example. Make it a point to reference the corporate website, announce new printed publications, and direct the people's attention to upcoming events at headquarters.

Engage in regular communication with the Superintendent General and his representatives on the

headquarters staff, or with your District Superintendent and/or Regional Director. As ministers, we are encouraged to call or email when we have suggestions or stand in need of advice or input. We may also want to update the Superintendent General, District Superintendent, or Regional Director on such items as personal family matters, the progress of a new minister, concerns or challenges facing our congregations, proposed plans or projects, etc. We should make it a point to update headquarters at least annually on the condition of the parsonage and the church, what improvements have been made, and what needs to be done. The headquarters office staff appreciates it when we contribute news from our individual locations for the corporate church website, send information regarding our special events for the website calendar, and quickly update any information changes related to our local church. They also appreciate receiving articles or transcribed sermons from the branch churches.

Pray for the work at headquarters. Paul referenced the efficacy of prayer to the believers at Corinth, writing, "Ye also helping together by prayer for us" (2 Corinthians 1:11). The prayers of our fraternity of ministers for the work of the Lord are probably one of the most underestimated, but strongest and most prevailing forces in our ministry. We are not in this alone, and we want to be faithful in prayer for the work at headquarters, the efforts worldwide, and for one another.

[1] See the section of this manual titled *Organizational Structure and Roles* for more information on this topic.

[2] Scripture passages portraying the connection between Jerusalem church leaders and outlying groups include Acts 6:1-4, Acts chapter 15, and Galatians 2:9.

[3] See the section of this manual titled *Financial Stewardship* for more information on this topic.

[4] The principle of tithing the tithe money is established in Nehemiah 10:38-39, which indicates that the Levites tithed of the peoples' tithes and gave that tithe for the support of the priests.

Counsel for Ministers

As we communicate our perspectives and opinions to the ministry at headquarters, we should be aware that others may have deeply held views that have been expressed with conviction, sincerity, and passion, that do not align with our own. That may not be disclosed to us when we offer our own viewpoints. Our *responsibility* as ministers of the Gospel is to respond to requests for our input, offering whatever information we can that will assist church leadership in making the right decision. Our *privilege* as ministers of the Gospel is to offer our perspective when we feel led by God to do so. But in both cases, once we have offered the information we have to those in spiritual authority over us, our responsibility ends. We must take our hands off the situation and simply pray that God will lead those in authority to the right conclusion.

Differences between pastors and assisting ministers, or pastors and congregation members will arise occasionally. These should be addressed locally first, in accordance with the Biblical principle that instructs us to go to our brother when such situations occur (see Matthew 5:23-24). If the matter cannot be resolved, then it is appropriate for it to be brought to the attention of the Superintendent General, District Superintendent, or Regional Director for assistance.

Support of Other Branches

The converted Jews of the Early Church initially had a tendency to be exclusive, and to separate themselves somewhat from their Gentile brethren. That may have been what led Paul to write his epistle to the Ephesians, which emphasizes the need for unity. In chapter four, Paul used the complex structure of the human body as an example of how the Body of Christ should function. He noted how the body's parts are unique, and yet they are "fitly joined together" (Ephesians 4:16)—a phrase that in the original Greek means "bonded and knit together."

While Paul's message was directed to individuals within the church, the principle of unity also applies to the relationship that should exist between churches of our Apostolic Faith organization. We are one body, composed of many members—or branches—and we should function together in unity and harmony.

As pastors and ministers, we have different backgrounds, different personalities, different strengths and weaknesses. Our congregations may differ widely in size, average age, economic levels, and ethnic and cultural backgrounds. It is a good and amazing thing how God takes us as unique individuals and bodies of believers, and helps us to work together as one! Together we make a mighty army. We may be relatively few in number, but we are mighty in desire, mighty in passion, mighty in purpose, and together we really are one body.

None of us serves alone—we are a vital part of the body wherever we labor. We need one another, and we must stand together. There are a number of ways we can support one another, regardless of where we are currently serving.

Attend the combined meetings or special events at neighboring branch churches whenever possible. Make sure you announce and promote events scheduled in other branch churches to your local congregations. Post flyers if available. If your group is small, you may even wish to close down your own scheduled service and go together.

Communicate regularly with your fellow pastors. There is great value in staying in touch with the pastors and ministers of the other branch churches in your general area. Coordinate your schedules to maximize opportunities for shared events in which the greatest number can participate.

Share pulpits. When a pastor needs to be out of town, or is physically unable to handle the responsibilities of his local church for an extended period, he or she should feel free to request help from headquarters or another branch church.

Work together at youth camps, retreats, camp meetings, and other joint events. Good pastors and ministers will not restrict their attention or activities to their particular congregation. Galatians 5:13 admonishes us, "By love serve one another." Tasks are accomplished more quickly and efficiently when done together.

Stay informed. Learn what is taking place in other branch churches via the church website and make sure your congregation is kept abreast.

Pray for each other. Paul instructed the believers in Galatia to bear one another's burdens (see Galatians 6:2), for burdens are lighter when they are shared. When one suffers, we all suffer. When one wins a victory, we all rejoice.

When we live separate and disconnected lives, the good news of the Gospel is eclipsed by the shadow of disunity. But when the church is united, God's plan for the church shines forth with brilliance. As the horizon of each individual pastor and congregation broadens, our appreciation for what God has done for our organization as a whole also broadens. Our attitudes will mirror the attitude of Paul: "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now" (Philippians 1:3-5).

Counsel for Ministers

We want to avoid defining ourselves and our congregations in terms of where we live. Headquarters and the various branch churches are not separate entities. We are one entity! We just happen to live in different areas of the world. There should be no sense of "competing" with headquarters or with other branches. We must remember that while we are in one location today, we may be called to serve in some other branch church in days to come, if Jesus tarries. Unity and fellowship between branches will make those inevitable transitions occur much more seamlessly.

Loyalty: Upholding Church Doctrine and Policy

As pastors and ministers in the Apostolic Faith organization, we must uphold the Gospel that has been given us with unfaltering loyalty, allegiance, and faithfulness. Our responsibility as shepherds and guardians of this fellowship is to follow the Apostle Paul's admonition, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:6-8).

In his epistles to Timothy and Titus, Paul emphasized the importance of upholding and preaching sound doctrine.[1] The Greek word translated *doctrine* in these passages is more inclusive than some realize—it is defined as "instruction, learning, teaching." We must be cautious of drawing a definite distinction between what we call "doctrine" and what we identify as "standards" or "policies," since that distinction does not exist in the Bible. In 2 Thessalonians 2:15 we are commanded, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions [transmissions, precepts, or ordinances] which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle." In the Apostolic Faith organization, we have been entrusted with good teachings that encourage holy living, and our mandate is to hold to those teachings and pass them on to the next generation.

Satan's design is for the church to become more like the world. Many religious organizations that once stood for a holiness way of life have abandoned it. What was viewed as wrong a generation or two ago is not identified as wrong any longer. The trend seems to be for ministers to preach what people will accept rather than to preach what people need to hear. However, God calls us to withstand the current that goes against the teachings of His Word. Our message must proclaim timeless Bible truths in the context of today's society. Those who listen may reject the truth, but we are not to let that sway us.

The fourth chapter of 1 Timothy begins with the warning that "in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Timothy 4:1). We live in those times, so we must purpose to be unfailingly loyal to the doctrines of God's Word. Paul also warned Timothy that "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

The appropriate response to these troubled times is found in Hebrews 2:1, where we read, "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." [2] The original word translated *slip* is a nautical term that suggests "drifting away." Drifting can happen almost imperceptibly. While some individuals will reject the Gospel outright, there is also a great danger that those who once knew the truth will simply neglect what they have heard and gradually drift away. As ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, God has called us to do all we can to maintain and pass on a holiness way of life.

Paul challenged Timothy to keep that which had been committed to his trust (see 1 Timothy 6:20). In 2 Timothy, he repeated the same thought, admonishing, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me" (2 Timothy 1:13). The phrase, "the form of sound words" indicates that Timothy was to retain more than specific words. It was the spirit of the message that Paul had conveyed to Timothy which he wanted him in turn to convey to others.

The generations come and go quickly, and we must be sure that each succeeding generation receives the pure Gospel that was presented to us. We cannot separate where we are going from where we have been. Our vision, our mission, is rooted in our heritage and extends into our future as Jesus tarries. Our mandate from God is to take the teachings that were delivered to us and pass them on intact to the next generation. May God help us all to be faithful in this charge!

[1] Additional Scriptures in which Paul emphasized the importance of upholding and preaching sound doctrine include 1Timothy 1:3-6 and 4:16.

[2] Jude issued the same injunction, writing, "It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). He was telling them, "Don't forget what was taught to you. Strive for it and pay earnest attention to it."

Counsel to Ministers

It is appropriate and necessary for the church to establish policies for those who participate. In Acts 15, people came to the church leadership in Jerusalem with opposing perspectives regarding policy. A discussion was held and a determination was made. In later chapters, we observe that those who submitted themselves to the determination of church leadership went on to be blessed of God.

We do not impose church policy on those who choose not to participate in our work—we allow every individual to make the choices they feel they need to make. Nor should we suggest that salvation is contingent upon abiding by our policy. We have made policy decisions as a church organization to protect the unity and stability of our work around the world, but we recognize the right of individuals to make a personal choice regarding whether or not they wish to be a part of our fellowship.

One writer notes that for many church positions there is "no express divine command. They are matters of convenience; things that tend to the order and harmony" of the church. "Hence, in the church we are to submit to all the proper regulations for conducting public worship; for the promotion of religion; and for the administration of discipline." Those who submit themselves to the order God has established live a rich life within the church. Those who resist it live in varying degrees of frustration, for the deeper issue is subjection to God.

Pastors and ministers may contact the Superintendent General for advice on how to handle questions regarding church policy.

As ministers, we will encounter some who want to combatively debate doctrine and church policy. We stand on good Biblical ground when we dismiss outright those who attempt to undermine it or sow discord in the church, for Paul admonished, "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Thessalonians 3:6).

The Bible is clear that believers are to submit to the authority of the church, as long as that authority does not conflict with the higher authority of God's Word, which grants the church its authority (see Hebrews 13:17). Subordination is a Bible doctrine, and is necessary for the welfare of the church. However, we must take care not to use such authority to "lord it over" God's people (see 1 Peter 5:2-4). We need to be aware that differences in perspective are not necessarily sowing discord. A minister who is insecure in his or her leadership can unwisely overreact, demanding that others follow. Subordination must be something that is willingly given by the flock because of their love for God and respect for the leader, rather than something that can be demanded or required.

Many of the religious organizations in the world today advocate a different approach to both doctrine and policy than what we take in the Apostolic Faith Church. We cast no judgment on those who practice their faith differently than we do ours. We do not speak ill of them. Even though we are very loyal to the Apostolic Faith, it is not necessary to preach the Apostolic Faith or to specifically denounce other organizations—that should not be done from the pulpit. We preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Supporting and Participating in Church Activities

As ministers in the Apostolic Faith organization, we should be genuinely interested in the activities of our church and supportive of the outreach endeavors undertaken by the workers, remembering that we are all "labourers together" in the furtherance of the Gospel (see 1 Corinthians 3:9). There are a number of ways we can indicate our support.

Participate personally when feasible. While we may not be able to take an active role in every department of the church, we should participate whenever it is possible for us to do so. Laboring alongside the other Gospel workers will help us stay vitally connected with what is going on, and will also communicate that we are all workers together in a common cause. When the church is engaged in building projects or improvements on the church facilities, we should take part if we are physically able and technically qualified to do so. We want to be willing to step in and teach a Sunday school class, lead the music, help clean the church, or go on a Gospel team visitation occasionally, even if it is not feasible to involve ourselves in those areas on a regular basis. We should make it a point to attend youth services (unless they are age restricted) and special activities presented by or at the church.

Communicate regularly. It is important that we make it a point to communicate frequently with those who participate in the various ministries of the church. Memos, emails, telephone calls, and occasionally meeting with various groups of workers help us to stay in touch with what is going on. We should also make sure our congregations know that they can always come to us with questions, concerns, or input.

Involve the spiritually qualified. Those in our congregations will have a stronger connection to the church if they are allowed to participate. And when we encourage spiritually qualified individuals to fill a needed role, we also show support for those who are already working in that particular area by supplying them with the assistance they need.

Offer encouragement. Many of the ministries of the church require ongoing commitment on the part of those involved. An encouraging word can go a long way toward keeping everyone enthusiastic about the privilege of having a part. If we are not helping on the janitorial team, we can show support by dropping by when they are cleaning the church. If we are not teaching a Sunday school class, we can indicate interest by going to a Sunday school roundtable session on occasion. Doing so conveys that we notice and appreciate the efforts being made.

Provide tools for success. Every department of the church has needs, and every project requires resources. As pastors, it is part of our responsibility to carefully evaluate how to best meet these needs and provide resources consistent with our operating budget. Careful stewardship should always be modeled, but we do not want to discourage workers by authorizing a project and then failing to provide what is needed to complete it effectively.

Express appreciation publicly and privately. People respond to appreciation! While we know that the workers give of their time and talents as unto the Lord, occasionally acknowledging their efforts publicly is a way of showing support. At other times, a short personal card or note is appropriate. Just as we express appreciation to our own families as a way of demonstrating our love for them, we should express appreciation to our church family.

Promote and publicize. As ministers and pastors, we should enthusiastically promote church functions and outreaches—both to our own church congregations and in the community at large. We are supporters of the Apostolic Faith work, and we are happy to let people know that!

Some of us may not feel qualified to lend influence or inspiration to certain activities. For example, if we are not musically talented, we may assume we have no role in the music department of our local congregation. However, while we may not be qualified to directly participate, we are certainly able to show our support

and appreciation. The musicians (as well as those taking part in other aspects of the church work) should be noticed, encouraged, and reminded frequently that their "labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Counsel to Ministers

As pastors and ministers, we must recognize that our ministerial duty is not solely a call to preach, or to some exclusive phase of pastoral responsibility. We must be willing to labor in whatever capacity is needed in our location. The Apostle Peter wrote that he was not only an Apostle, but also an elder and a servant (see 1 Peter 1:1; 5:1; and 2 Peter 1:1). While he was an evangelist and a preacher of great ability, he did not consider it below his calling to do the work of an elder. A measure of pastoral duty is required of all ministers. At various times, we may be called upon to be teachers, counselors, prayer warriors, comforters, organizers, guardians, developers, or administrators. In short, we are called to serve our people, and that may entail a wide range of duties.

To do this capably we must walk close to God with not only an outward attitude of willingness, but with genuine willingness in our hearts. We want to have the spirit of the Apostle Paul, who wrote to the church at Thessalonica that "being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us" (1 Thessalonians 2:8).

Scripture indicates that God calls and equips us for specific roles in the ministry at certain stages of our lives. In Ephesians 4:11, Paul wrote that God has called some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers. However, that does not mean that we will be solely charged with those responsibilities. Paul the Apostle advised Timothy to "preach the word" and to "reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:2) but he also counseled him to "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Timothy 4:5). In our own organization, we have had evangelists who have become pastors, and who have done well in both areas. Likewise, there are pastors who have felt that they were not really qualified to evangelize, but when they were obedient to the call of God, they have been mightily used by God in that role.

Leading People to Christ

Among our various ministerial duties, none is more important than that of leading people to Christ. Jesus' first words to Peter and Andrew were "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). He repeated the same commission just before He ascended to Heaven, telling His disciples, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

While we have a responsibility to the flock of God under our care, we also have a responsibility to those who are outside of God's family. Spiritual vision is the ability to see the opportunities within our current circumstances. For each unsaved individual we know personally, there are probably scores or even hundreds more whose lives intersect with ours occasionally. God has ordained that His message be spread to these people through us. We are to be His witnesses to the life-transforming power in His name.

Our efforts to win souls for Christ must not be limited to what we can do from behind the pulpit. There are only a few places where we can preach, but personal evangelism can be done anywhere. Church services are limited to a few hours a week, but talking with someone about his or her soul can occur seven days a week, and any time of the day or night. Though only a small percentage of those in our community attend our church services, there are people all around us who need to know how Christ can transform their lives. While our messages in the church setting must be general, when we deal with people one-on-one about their need of God, we can tailor the message to fit the individual.

There are certain conditions for success in soul-winning.

We must have a clean and fully-surrendered life. Paul told Timothy, "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Timothy 2:21). Great natural gifts or persuasive ability alone will not bring success. God does not demand a beautiful vessel for His work, but He does demand a clean and surrendered one.

We must understand the lost condition of humanity. Those who are most successful in helping people see their need of salvation are those who deeply realize that individuals without God are eternally lost. James said, "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death" (James 5:20). Paul related that for three years, he "ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31). We need to pray for a profound spiritual understanding of the lost condition of mankind.

We must have a genuine love for people. Nothing is a more compelling influence than a real love for others. People find it hard to resist one who speaks to them about their souls out of genuine love. And they will never believe we love them unless we truly do! A love for people's souls is a gift of the Spirit of God, for the first fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians is love (see Galatians 5:22).

We must have perseverance and patience. Sometimes the salvation of a soul requires prevailing day after day, week after week, and even month after month. We must not give up and consider someone beyond help. We are to "take…the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience" (James 5:10).

We must know our Bible. It is the Word that produces conviction for sin, so a thorough knowledge of the Word of God is a necessity. Paul told the Ephesians to "take…the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17). That is the instrument God has appointed for salvation.

We must pray. If we want to be used of God in winning souls, we will need to spend much time in prayer, asking God to bring us to the right people, to give us the right message, to anoint us with His power, and to make our efforts for Him fruitful.

We must labor in the power of the Holy Ghost. In Acts 1:8, Jesus told His followers, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." The definite empowerment by the Holy Ghost was a necessity for power in the Early Church, and it is still a necessity today.

Individuals who we approach about their need to be saved will fall into one of several classes: those who are completely ignorant of God and their need for salvation, those who are religious but have an erroneous view of salvation, those who realize their need of a Savior and want to be saved, and those who have little or no concern about their souls.

Those who are ignorant of God. For people in this category, we must be prepared to begin with the basics. They will need to understand that they are special creations of God and loved by Him. Sin has separated them and the rest of humanity from God, but He has bridged this separation through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, providing forgiveness of sins for all who will receive it.

Those who are religious but have an erroneous view of salvation. Those in this category may include church members who assume their salvation is secure because they were confirmed in the church, water baptized, or have accepted Christ. We will need to point them to the possibility of living a life of victory over sin through a definite experience of salvation. At times this can be done by inquiring whether they *know* that their sins have been forgiven and they are ready for eternity. If they evidence any doubt, that offers an opening for explaining how to find true assurance.

Those who want to be saved. There are wonderful promises in the Word of God that can encourage people who are in this category. We should be prepared to point them to verses such as "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37), or "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12). We should continue to encourage them until they have a real assurance of salvation, using such Scriptures as John 3:36, which promises, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." We should always follow up with direction as to how to live the Christian life, encouraging new believers to tell others of their conversion (see Matthew 10:32), to study the Word of God (see Psalm 119:11), to pray regularly (1 Thessalonians 5:17), and to surrender their will to God and obey Him in all things (Acts 5:32).

Those who have little or no concern about their souls. When dealing with people in this group, our goal must be to bring about that concern. At times, a verse such as Romans 14:12, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" may help them see their need. Or they may be impacted by a verse that points out the awful consequences of sin, such as "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). We must ask the Spirit to direct us in how to show them the peril of neglecting salvation, and the wonderful love of God who is reaching out to them in mercy.

As we attempt to bring people to Christ, we will find that some have difficulties that they feel are insurmountable when it comes to receiving salvation. It will be helpful if we prayerfully consider in advance some of the objections which may be raised, and consider what Scriptures might best deal with those objections. Following are some of the common obstacles that unbelievers express.

"I have sinned too greatly. God could never forgive me." A wonderful passage that confronts this perception is 1 Timothy 1:15, which reads, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

"My heart is too hard. I don't feel anything." We can ask those who make such statements if they feel, then, that they are lost. If they assent, we can point them to Luke 19:10, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

"I am afraid I cannot stay saved." To those who struggle with this fear, we can use a verse such as Jude 24, which brings out that Christ "is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the pres-

ence of his glory with exceeding joy." Those who are focused on their own weakness may find courage in Paul's statement, "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

"I cannot give up my sin." There is one simple way to refute such a thought: the Biblical injunction that they must be willing to give up sin, or they will perish eternally. (See Romans 6:23 and Galatians 6:7-8.)

"I tried to be saved before, but failed." A good verse to use with those who point to this as their difficulty is 2 Corinthians 9:8, "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

"The Christian life is too hard." In Matthew 11:30, Christ states that His yoke is easy and his burden is light. We read in 1 John 5:3, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."

"I would have to give up too much." This mindset is often present even when it is not verbalized. If we sense this attitude, we could reference Mark 8:36-37, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

"I have been seeking God but I cannot seem to find Him." We can confidently tell one who expresses this perspective, "I can tell you exactly when you will find Christ." This may surprise the individual. Follow up with Jeremiah 29:13, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Help the individual understand that up to this time, he must not have been searching for God with all his heart.

"I have sinned away my day of grace." Those who feel they have spurned God for so long that they no longer have an opportunity to be forgiven can be pointed to John 6:37, which we may need to repeat over and over again. Another useful passage may be Romans 10:13, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Repeatedly draw their attention to the word "whosoever."

We must approach such discussions with solemnity and earnestness, and in the power of the Holy Ghost. When we deal with a person's need for salvation, we are addressing a life and death matter with them! God will give us insight and grace as we do our best to prepare ourselves for this tremendously important aspect of our ministry.

Counsel for Ministers:

While we must set the example of interest in the souls of men, and willingness to address the spiritual needs of those we come in contact with, we must also encourage the members of our congregations to do the same. The work of evangelism is not solely for preachers. Evangelism is also to be accomplished by individual Christians, for every believer is called to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). Let us continually hold that challenge before the people.

In the Apostolic Faith organization, we close our services with an invitation for all to pray. This is a prime opportunity to deal directly with seekers, and we should observe those who come forward to seek God for an experience and try to make sure that we, or another qualified minister or worker, prays across the altar from that individual.

Continuing Steadfast When Facing Challenges

As ministers of the Gospel, we will face challenges at times. In 2 Timothy 2:3, the Apostle Paul admonished the younger minister, Timothy, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." The Greek word *kakopatheho,* translated "endure hardness" in this verse, is used only three other places in the New Testament. Later in the same chapter, the word is translated "suffer trouble." Further on in 2 Timothy, it is translated "endure afflictions." The fourth time it occurs is in the Book of James, where it also has the sense of "afflictions." So *kakopatheho* means "to endure hardness, suffer trouble, and endure afflictions." What Paul was conveying to Timothy is conveyed to us as well: we will face hard places in our ministry.

The Apostle used a military analogy in 2 Timothy 2:3. Those who serve in the military typically leave home, family, friends, and vocation, subjecting themselves to their commander and yielding control of their lives to the military branch of the government. We have enlisted in God's service, and have subjected our lives to our Commander. He controls our present and our future. And like Timothy, we will need to endure hardness as part of being a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

Paul spent many months in Arabia after his conversion, and we can gather that the Lord was using that Arabian experience to school him. We will have "Arabian experiences" as well, where the Lord allows hardships or solitary times that are designed to help us grow. We need to advance beyond the place where challenges cause us to become weak and discouraged, or we will never survive spiritually.

The Apostle endured his share of disappointments in the course of his ministry, including things that could well have caused him to become disheartened. In one place he relates, "No man stood with me, but all men forsook me" (2 Timothy 4:16). However, in the next verse, he adds, "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me." We are never alone, even if we feel lonely, for we have the assurance that God stands with us. The saints of God stand with us too. We are surrounded by godly people in our worldwide church family who have a stake in this Latter Rain Gospel. They have been blessed by it, as we have been, so we need to withstand every attempt by the enemy to sidetrack us, and know that God is going to continue to bless.

We know that God is the One who called us to the ministry. However, in Colossians 1:23, Paul said he was "made" a minister. When we make something, we expend time and energy to accomplish our task. Being *called* to be ministers does not *make* us ministers. Part of what makes us ministers includes enduring hardship. While suffering in itself does not make us a better person, if we respond to suffering by allowing it to shape our character in a positive fashion, then we have chosen to benefit by it.

In 2 Corinthians 4:8-9, the Apostle described some of what he endured, relating, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." A few verses later, he stated, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:16-17). We usually think of challenges or difficulties as working *against* us, but here we see where our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works *for* us. The very things that we think of as opposing forces are for our development and strengthening.

Not many of us will face the difficulties that Paul faced, but we may be mischaracterized, misunderstood, and unappreciated. Still, we must never think of ourselves as victims. Just as Jesus gave Himself willingly to accomplish a certain goal, we willingly endure those things as unto the Lord.

God calls us to remain holy, steadfast, and faithful in the midst of difficulties. He requires us, as He required the Early Church, to be patient and to persevere in the midst of great adversity. Etched in our spirits must be the assurance that our labor is not done for an earthly reward but for a crown of glory that will never fade, "for we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (Hebrews 3:14).

There will be waves of revival and times of encouragement along the way, and other times when revival and encouragement are lacking. Either way, we look to the God who gave us our mission and remain confident that He will fulfill it. We have every reason in the world to go forward with a buoyant spirit and believe that God is going to work everything for good, as He always has done.

Civic Responsibilities

God's Word instructs believers to function as salt and light in society and to fulfill their civic responsibilities,[1] and this would include those of us who have been called to the ministry. At times we may be asked to participate in community events of a patriotic or civic nature apart from our own church activities. While our first obligation is toward the work of the Lord, it is also our duty to be mindful of seeing that our way of life and freedom of worship is preserved. So taking part in events of this nature is acceptable, if our schedules permit, and providing it does not include endorsing a political candidate, engaging in political debate, or taking part in activities that would reflect negatively on our Christian witness.

As an organization, the Apostolic Faith Church takes a neutral stance on purely political issues. However, in some countries, including the United States, there is a growing trend for government to set aside Biblical principles and identify sinful behavior such as abortion and homosexuality as civil rights. As ministers of the Gospel, we must stand against error. We are called to preach the whole counsel of God, not only presenting salvation through Jesus Christ, but also declaring Biblical truth concerning the moral absolutes that are being debated in our day.

We encourage members of our congregations to influence society and the political process by exercising their right to vote, maintaining strong moral convictions and holy lifestyles (Matthew 5:13), praying for government officials (1 Timothy 2:1-2), and supporting legislation that strengthens the nation morally.

[1] Matthew 5:13-16, 40-42; 17:24-27; 22:21; Romans 13:1-7.

Counsel to Ministers:

While we may speak out against moral and social evil, it is advisable to avoid making comments of a purely political nature in church services or in Sunday school. We run the risk of alienating, or at least distracting, a good portion of our audience if we publicly support any one political position. In the United States we jeopardize our status as a nonprofit church organization if we endorse political candidates.

Generally speaking, it is best to avoid private political discussions with anyone other than our close family members or friends whose political convictions we already know. Engaging with others on potentially controversial matters can cause friction or even division. There are some political issues upon which honest, sincere Christians hold differing opinions. These should not be allowed to create contention in the church.

Counseling

As we consider the variety of problems confronting people in their personal lives, we recognize the truth of the statement recorded in Job 5:7, "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward." Psychologists, analysts, and secular counselors offer many theories to explain relational problems, and an equal number of methodologies devised to bring solutions. However, the Word of God is clear that "the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

As ministers of the Gospel, we often will be called upon to counsel with individuals who are dealing with troubling issues. In the Apostolic Faith organization, we distinguish between therapy and Biblical or spiritual counsel. We offer the latter. We do not offer the former, even if we view ourselves as qualified and are licensed. Offering therapy is not our calling; our calling is to offer the counsel of the Lord.

While therapeutic techniques may provide some help, we know that obedience to Biblical instruction is the foundation for lasting peace, and what enables a person to live in a manner pleasing to God in spite of challenges in his personal life.[1] God's Word sets forth principles and guidance for understanding the mental process, evaluating emotional needs and responses, and controlling behavior. It is the best source for help, for "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds" (2 Corinthians 10:4).

There are a number of guidelines which will help us as we approach the challenges of providing counsel to troubled individuals.

Look to the Holy Spirit for guidance. We must have insight and discernment from Heaven, for God alone knows the hearts of the individuals concerned, as well as the other contributing factors. We need to pray personally before we begin a counseling session, asking for God to bring clarity, healing, grace, and comfort. Sessions should start and end with prayer.

Keep people's primary need in mind. Salvation for the soul is people's greatest need. When we meet with individuals who are not saved, our underlying objective will be to lead them to recognition of this fact. As we help troubled individuals see the importance of surrender to Jesus Christ, we point them away from a humanistic focus on self and their troubles to a proper focus on Him.[2]

Limit the scope. While many counselors take a therapeutic or psychological approach in working with troubled individuals, our approach should be spiritual and Biblical in nature. That is the role God has called us to fill.

Uphold Biblical values. The counsel of the Lord will always reinforce Scriptural truths such as marriage between one man and one woman for life, the importance of family, the sanctity of human life, and Biblical instruction for holy living. Emphasis on these principles can help the person identify behaviors that are contrary to God's Word, and establish new patterns of living.

Differentiate physical/mental problems and problems that are caused by sin. Symptoms such as mental confusion, erratic behavior, personality disorders, stress, and even depression may have roots in physical or mental health deficiencies. Be cautious about coming to a quick conclusion about the nature of the problem. Obviously, a physical or mental health problem requires a much different approach than a spiritual deficiency. In those cases, the approach would include referral to a medical or mental health professional.

Use Biblical principles. Principles such as the need for forgiveness, refraining from judging, preferring one another in love, controlling our tongues, telling the truth, and supporting the weak apply in many types of conflict. As ministers of the Gospel, our call is to show how Biblical guidelines should be applied to the problems of life.

Point individuals to their personal responsibility before God. The Bible teaches that we all will give an ac-

count of ourselves before God. We must show those who are troubled that they are responsible before God for their *own* thoughts, words, actions, and reactions. They are not responsible for changing anyone else, nor will attempts to do so be successful in most cases.

Focus on the internal rather than external. Not all problems can be resolved. However, we can tell troubled individuals that the peace promised by God does not depend on one's financial situation, work environment, the behavior of others, or any external circumstance. God's peace depends upon our having a right relationship with Him, and walking in obedience to His Word.

[1] See 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:3-4.

[2] In today's society, many pastors and ministers take a therapeutic instead of a spiritual approach to core problems, focusing more on "felt needs" than on unacknowledged spiritual issues. They suggest that loneliness, fear of failure, poor self-image, depression, anger, resentment, and similar inward-focused inadequacies are at the root of drug addiction, immorality, and other sins, rather than human depravity.

Counsel for Ministers

Counseling is primarily the responsibility of the pastor, and should be done by assisting ministers only at the pastor's direction. The pastor is in the best position to know the circumstances and personalities involved in situations that arise in the congregation.

Occasionally a pastor (especially one who is new at the location) may find it beneficial to consult with an assistant pastor, Sunday school superintendent, or other leader of some department of the church who has knowledge regarding a situation or individual. At times what seems like a "new" challenge to the pastor is found to be merely the latest episode of something that has been ongoing for years. The input of individuals with awareness of the matter may be discreetly solicited by the pastor in order to form a more complete picture. In such cases, every effort should be made to preserve confidentiality.

It is important to take precautions when counseling with individuals of the opposite gender. If such counseling is done in a private office, we should leave the door open and ask someone to remain nearby, restricting such sessions to times when at least one other adult is present, visible, and aware that a session is taking place. Do not meet one-on-one in a restaurant or coffee shop or at the mall, even though there are strangers around. We should also limit the time of day, length of the meeting, and number of sessions. If extended counseling is required, we should recommend Christian counseling from a local professional.

If an individual's problems are beyond our scope of experience, we should not hesitate to acknowledge this. We may want to seek input from a senior pastor, our District Superintendent, or from the Superintendent General. Occasionally it may be necessary to suggest the one being counseled seek professional medical or legal help.

The privacy of the person being dealt with must be preserved. While there are times when we rightfully seek guidance from a fellow pastor or a professional who has knowledge or experience about the situation at hand, we proceed carefully and share only the necessary details. To casually divulge the problems or short-

comings of one whom we have counseled is highly unethical. In addition, doing so could put you at legal risk.

In the United States, legal authorities cannot generally require a minister to testify in court concerning statements which were made to him in confidence in his pastoral capacity, as these are considered protected communications. There are exceptions to this, however, and if pressure is brought upon us in this regard, we should ask our legal representative or the presiding judge exactly what is required of us before we give our testimony. In light of this possibility, it is a good practice to document our counseling sessions, keeping in a secure place our notes of the time, place, date, and content of our discussions.

Where there is conflict between two members of the church that cannot be settled independently, it is our duty as ministers to attempt to effect reconciliation, stressing the necessity of obedience to the words of Jesus recorded in Matthew 18:15-35.

Those who come to the ministry and make a confession of wrongdoing should be cautioned that this does not absolve them from confessing the sin to God or making restitution to man. Even though acknowledging their sin to us brings them a certain amount of relief, God alone can forgive sin. We should encourage the individual to make full confession to Him, making it clear that our position is strictly that of an advisor.

A few further pointers:

- Be professional in manner and approach.
- Study the issue and be sure you have all the facts.
- Give everyone a fair hearing.
- Listen carefully.
- Maintain pastoral connections with all involved. Don't withdraw from those who seem to contest your advice or perspective.
- Control the counseling schedule and the emotional climate of the discussion.
- Avoid taking sides.
- Be sympathetic and kind.

Conflict Management

One of our responsibilities as pastors and ministers of the Gospel is to handle conflicts between members or groups in the Apostolic Faith organization.

What is conflict? Conflict is contention or disagreement between individuals who hold opinions or perspectives that are at variance. Though the word *conflict* does not occur in Scripture, a variety of other words such as *dispute, division, quarrel, strife,* and *contention* are employed to describe interpersonal differences. One renowned conflict mediator states, "I find it useful to think of conflict as existing if at least one person believes it to exist."[1]

What causes conflict? Conflict generally occurs when the desires, expectations, or fears of one person or group of people collide with the desires, expectations, or fears, of another person or group (see James 4:1-3). Obviously, unbelievers will have clashes because their lives are governed by Satan. However, even among sanctified individuals, unity is not automatic. Differences occur because God did not make us clones of each other, nor did He remove all our individual characteristics and preferences when He saved us. Differences can escalate into conflict when individuals fail to seek a Biblical method of resolution.

Often, conflict in the church is a result of differing personalities or goals, unmet expectations, incompatible preferences, contrasting methods of operation, competition for resources or power, poor communication, or resistance to change. Unresolved conflict can lead to hindered spiritual growth, bitterness, discord, stress, and "coolness" between members of God's family.

How should conflicts be resolved? Many differences can be resolved simply by overlooking offenses (see Proverbs 19:11), following the example of our Lord, "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Peter 2:23). If that is not possible—for example, in a case where a direct conflict exists—a personal attempt should be made in private for reconciliation between the parties involved (see Matthew 5:23-24).

What is the minister's role in resolving conflicts? There are times when controversies cannot be resolved through a personal approach. In those situations, church leaders may be asked to assist the participants in settling their dispute according to principles outlined in the Word of God (see Matthew18:15-17). Many of the epistles written by the Apostle Paul were penned in response to conflicts over doctrine, moral concerns, or interpersonal disputes in the church. Like the Apostle, our role as pastors and ministers is to attempt to facilitate a resolution that is just, equitable, and in accord with Scripture.

How does ministerial conflict resolution differ from secular resolution? Typically, church leaders will attempt to mediate a dispute, helping both sides work together toward a voluntary agreement or resolution. The difference between church mediation and secular mediation is that we hold the Bible authoritative in all matters of faith, doctrine, and manner of conflict resolution. We also depend upon the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. When the Israelites came to King Solomon with disputes, God granted him discernment so wise that it brought acclaim from many nations.[2] In our day as well, the Holy Spirit is our source of wisdom and discernment.

Paul states in 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 that disagreeing Christians should not resort to a secular judiciary system to settle their differences. Doing so sets aside the guidance of the Holy Spirit and puts the decision into the hands of a judge or jury who most likely are not Christians, and thus not likely to base their judgment upon Christian values. When those in conflict resort to secular courts, legal action can further damage relationships and discredit the participants' Christian witness. In addition, secular legal decisions are more apt than church decisions to fail to achieve complete justice, for only God can see the heart.

What steps should be taken in the resolution process? There is no single way to resolve conflicts between congregation members, because each situation we deal with as pastors and ministers will be unique in some aspects. However, establishing basic guidelines for the resolution process will be helpful.

- *Earn trust.* As pastors and ministers, we must have genuine concern for all participants in the conflict, so that every person involved senses they can trust us, that we genuinely care about them, and that we will do our best to guide them. They should have confidence that we will conduct the resolution process in a fair, orderly, and even-handed manner, and according to the Word of God (see 1 Corinthians 14:40). Such trust is only gained over time as people observe our consistent walk, application of Scripture to ourselves, and our commitment to confidentiality.
- *Pray for guidance, wisdom, and clarity.* We should always look to the Spirit of God for direction, rather than depending upon our own wisdom, no matter how well we think we understand the situation or the people involved. We can trust God to give us the practical tools and needed insight, even when situations appear to be extremely challenging. God's Word assures us, "Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the LORD understand all things" (Proverbs 28:5).
- *Meet with participants.* At times it may be appropriate to meet initially with participants on each side of the conflict individually. Once we have heard both viewpoints, we can bring together the individuals involved.
- *Gather facts.* It is important to make sure we hear all sides of the story. We read in Proverbs 18:13, "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him." Every participant should have a reasonable opportunity to present information they believe is relevant to the dispute. An example of this is found in Acts 15, where the Council of Jerusalem wrestled with a major conflict that divided the infant church. In that situation, Paul and Barnabas reported how God had used the converted Gentiles, while the opposing side presented their conviction that Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the Law of Moses. We should do our best to ascertain the interests, concerns, desires, needs, limitations, or fears of each individual involved in the conflict.
- *Identify the conflict.* Notice how Paul directly stated the issue causing contention when he addressed the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 1:10-12. In some cases it will be necessary to work with people who would rather avoid or ignore a problem situation. Being clear and definitive allows the matter to be dealt with. In addition, sometimes people are not aware of the effect their behavior has had on others. In such instances, simply realizing that something they did has caused conflict may move the resolution process forward rapidly.
- *Evaluate motives.* It may be helpful to ascertain the real priorities of each participant. Taking a conflict to church authorities should never be used as a weapon, a means of getting one's own way, a strategy to further one's personal agenda, a method of punishment, or a vehicle for retaliation. Rather, those involved should view the resolution process as the God-ordained way to bring about reconciliation and restoration between members of the family of God (see Galatians 6:1).
- *Present Biblical guidelines.* Key in on principles such as the importance of endeavoring to keep unity (Ephesians 4:3), refraining from judging motives (Matthew 7:1), the duty of reconciliation (Matthew 5:23-24), the importance of guilty individuals making restition (Acts 24:16), the need for mercy, meekness, forbearance, and forgiveness (Colossians 3:12-13), giving up the "right" to retaliation (1 Peter 3:9), and using truthful and edifying speech (Ephesians 4:29).
- *Facilitate discussion.* Listen patiently, speak gently, and present the truth in love. Strive to keep balance in the dialog, encouraging the involvement of all. We should assist the parties in identifying their interests and positions by asking key questions, requesting clarification, and restat-

ing basic points to make sure everyone understands correctly. We will want to protect vulnerable participants, and keep the focus on the issue. We should guide participants to move beyond blame, accusations, and focus on their own desires, to actively seeking acceptable solutions.

- *Encourage acceptance of responsibility.* It typically is much easier for those engaged in conflict to focus on the other person and that one's misdeeds than to take responsibility for their own role in the conflict. In some cases, restitution may be needed. Often, the whole complexion of a conflict changes when one individual can acknowledge and sincerely apologize for an offense.
- *Build consensus toward a Bible-based solution.* Guide both parties to consider ways out of the conflict situation by suggesting options or modifications to present policies/behaviors. At times it may be helpful to remind participants that successful conflict resolution in God's eyes may not be a matter of specific actions, but a commitment to faithful, dependent obedience. Make restoration and renewal the goal, rather than "winning" a contest.
- *Make sure everyone understands the conclusion reached.* In the conflict recorded in Acts 15, the decision of the Jerusalem Council was put into writing and transmitted to the Gentile Churches (see Acts 15:27-29) so no confusion could occur.
- *Encourage appropriate follow-up.* Words without accompanying actions are meaningless—true success in resolving an issue will be proved by actions over time. Participants must recognize that rebuilding trust and relationships is generally an ongoing process.
- *Recognize limits.* We must take care to guard against having unrealistic expectations when it comes to conflict resolution. Many times, conflicts may not be perfectly resolved. Ultimately, only God can change people. (See Romans 12:18; 2 Timothy 2:24-26). Individuals may harden their hearts and refuse to be reconciled, or claim to be at peace but still harbor a grudge in their hearts. We cannot force people to act in a certain way—we can only give them the counsel of God's Word and encourage them to follow it. However, even if individuals resist reconciliation, we can continue to trust that God is in control and will deal with them in His own way and time.

In conclusion, there are some final principles regarding conflict resolution that will help us fulfill our ministerial responsibilities in this regard.

- Be careful not to offer advice precipitously. It is best to get all the facts, and then allow some time for prayer and seeking the guidance of the Spirit rather than rushing to a quick conclusion.
- When gathering information, take care not to inadvertently encourage one participant to judge another person's motive. Ask them to share facts and perceptions, but to refrain from theorizing about motives, making assumptions, or offering reasons for the other person's actions.
- Remember that people in conflict often want someone to solve their problems for them. However, stepping in could deprive them of an opportunity to learn to resolve their own disputes in a Biblical manner. By requiring people to review and implement the principles of God's Word for themselves, we help them gain understanding in how to deal with future conflicts.
- Guard against harshness, even when dealing with individuals who are resistant, rebellious, defiant, and argumentative. We do not want our words to be "like the piercings of a sword" but rather the "tongue of the wise" which brings health and healing (see Proverbs 12:18).[3]
- Be alert to common strategies employed by people engaged in conflict. These may include blaming others, ignoring facts or points they would rather not face, rationalizing their own behavior, involving others to support their position, etc. At other times, people may insist that "God told me…." It can be challenging when opposing sides both claim that God is on their side!

- We must not give up too easily in seeking ways to resolve difficult conflicts. Others will be watching to see if we persevere. As ministers, we set an example for our congregations; those watching will be apt to respond in the same manner as we do when conflicts surface in their own lives.
- Avoid attempting to resolve disputes that should *not* be mediated by the church. These include: criminal matters, conflicts where participants wish to make an unlawful or unbiblical agreement, conflicts where participants exhibit violent behavior or mental or psychological disturbance, situations involving minors acting without parental consent or involvement, cases where legal counsel is already involved, and conflicts in which any participant rejects the process, becomes disruptive or abusive, or objects to Biblical principles.

The reality is that we may never enjoy a totally conflict-free church while we live on this earth. As ministers of the Gospel, however, we must preach the necessity of endeavoring to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3) and challenge those in our congregations to "be of one mind, [and] live in peace" with one another (2 Corinthians 13:11).

[1] Bernard Mayer, The Dynamics of Conflict Resolution: A Practitioner's Guide (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 5.

[2] See 1 Kings 3:28; 10:6-9.

[3] See also Galatians 6:1-2.

Counsel to Ministers

At times, conflicts in the church may involve us. We cannot use our role as ministers as a platform to resolve disputes in which we ourselves, or members of our family, are involved. At such times, we must step aside and put the matter before other pastors in our organization who are not personally involved in the matter.

Ministering to the Sick and Shut-In

Visitation and encouragement of the sick and shut-in are an important aspect of our responsibilities. Scripture indicates that all people, including Christians, will face times of adversity, sickness, and affliction. When people encounter these challenges, they need comfort and the assurance that God is mindful of their needs and He will help them. As ministers of the Gospel, our presence and prayers are a part of that reassurance.

Jesus himself referred to visiting the sick when He said of the righteous, "I was sick, and ye visited me" (Matthew 25:36). When He sent out His twelve disciples on their first mission, He indicated His concern for the afflicted by instructing His followers to "heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease" (Matthew 10:1). The concern that Christ showed for the bodily and spiritual welfare of those burdened by illness was continued by the Early Church in its ministry to the sick. The Apostle James observed that "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction…" (James 1:27). Our love for God forms the basis of reaching out to meet the needs of those who are afflicted or shut in.

The most important help we can offer the sick and afflicted is prayer. Though our schedules may place many and varied demands upon our time, we are never too busy to call on and pray for those who are suffering. We find instructions in James 5:13-14: "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."

In Bible times, pure olive oil was used to anoint those who were sick, and that is what we use today.[1] The oil has been consecrated by prayer—ministers prayed over it and asked God to use it for His glory and the healing of sick bodies. The anointing is done in the Name of the Lord, by the authority of the instructions given in God's Word. The attention and the glory are directed to God, for only God can heal—we simply act in obedience to His Word.

When we anoint a person, we take a bit of the anointing oil on a finger, put it on the afflicted individual's forehead, and acknowledge that we pray in the Name of the Lord. We place a hand lightly on the head of the sick person and pray aloud, asking that God will undertake and heal. We are careful not to pray so loudly that we distract or embarrass the one we are praying for. We do not touch them anywhere else, nor do we ask them the nature of their sickness. We pray in faith, and with a spirit of submission, with a peaceful assurance that God will do what is for the sick person's ultimate good.

While we do not know how God will answer in each individual case, Scripture indicates that extraordinary healings will occur. James concludes his instructions by saying, "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (James 5:15). When we pray over someone who we know is a backslider or a sinner, we often repeat that verse. This is not done to condemn the individual, but if that person's heart is reaching God's way, we want him to know that God will forgive.

At times, people may be physically unable to come to the ministry for prayer. When this circumstance occurred during the time of the Early Church, prayer was made in a different manner. We read in Acts 19:11-12, "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them." The believers anointed these handkerchiefs or aprons and sent them to the sick ones, in faith believing that as they received the articles, they would be healed.

Following this example, we do the same today. We anoint handkerchiefs with the oil used to anoint the sick who come to us for prayer. We place the handkerchief on an open Bible and ministers put their hands on

it—because they cannot put their hands on the head of the one who is sick—and pray in Jesus' name that prayer will avail for the one who receives the handkerchief. This practice has been blessed by God throughout the history of our work. Our literature and tracts are also prayed over by the ministry, and many people have been healed by laying these publications on their afflicted bodies in faith, knowing that prayers have been prayed over them. There is no charm or healing virtue in the handkerchief or the Gospel literature. The blessing is in the trustful prayer of the sick person, whose faith is strengthened by the knowledge that others have joined in prayer with him for the needed healing.

As ministers of the Gospel, we have both a responsibility and a great privilege to reach out with prayer, comfort, and encouragement to those who are suffering. Paul included this in his list of responsibilities of Christians one toward another, telling those at Thessalonica to "comfort the feebleminded, [and] support the weak" (1 Thessalonians 5:14). He charged the elders at Ephesus, "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak" (Acts 20:35).

There are a number of practical considerations to keep in mind when we visit the sick.

Call ahead. Other than in emergency situations, it generally is best to call ahead of time to find out if the patient is well enough for a visit, and to ascertain what would be a good time.

Keep visits brief. Our stay in the sickroom should not be long, unless the patient or family members request that we stay longer. When a person is seriously ill, conversing may be tiring, so we should do our best to relieve the sick person of the necessity of keeping the discussion going. We need to monitor the length of time of our visit, watching for indicators that we should leave.

Always offer to pray for the sick individual, read Scripture, and discuss spiritual needs or concerns. Sickroom prayers need not be lengthy or eloquent, but they must be heartfelt. While we naturally ask for God's presence, comfort, and help, we should not hesitate to pray for healing. We should offer comfort from the Word of God, reading a passage if circumstances seem appropriate. When patients and family members raise questions about healing, suffering, and forgiveness, we lean on the Spirit of God to help us respond.

Communicate with sensitivity. It is helpful to assess the physical and emotional climate of the patient and family members present in the sickroom. As we observe their response to our initial inquiries regarding how they are doing, we probably will be able to discern whether they want to share details. Listen and be empathetic. We should adapt the tone and substance of our conversation from verbal and nonverbal cues offered by the patient and family members.

Be prepared for emotional fragility. Illness, pain, and medications, along with the stress and uncertainty that often accompany serious physical problems, can all impact a person's emotions. We should accept emotional fragility as a normal response in those we visit. Tears may be close to the surface. We want to avoid offering overly optimistic comments or minimizing the individual's problems. Rather, we point them to the One who promises to bear our grief and carry our sorrows, doing our best to offer the solace of the Comforter.

Use the seating provided. We should not sit or lean on the bed. We can stand for a short period of time by the patient, or sit if offered a chair next to the bed so that we can talk and maintain eye contact easily.

Respect confidentiality. Be cautious about sharing specifics related to the sick person's diagnosis, treatment, and expectations for recovery without permission from the patient or patient's family. For the most part, it is the immediate family's right and responsibility to share personal information as they deem best.

Recognize limitations. Some people may have needs that we cannot meet, such as financial help, social services, or counseling. We must not feel guilty or pressured to go beyond our ministerial role, though we do our best to point them to appropriate resources. And we must always assure those we visit that we will pray God will supply their needs.

In visiting those who are sick or injured, we should take care *not* to do the following:

- Register shock or make comments about a patient's appearance.
- Wear after-shave lotion or perfume. Illness often makes people more sensitive to smell.
- Offer medical opinions or predictions about a patient's recovery.
- Engage in discussion or criticism about the quality of care the patient is receiving.
- Discuss unpleasant news, personal issues, or controversial matters.
- Wake a sleeping patient.
- Touch or move hospital equipment.
- Assume that a comatose patient cannot hear.
- Whisper to relatives or caregivers in the patient's hearing.
- Help the sick individual get out of bed, eat, take medications, or any other task that is the responsibility of the caregiver, unless we receive express permission.

When our visits are in hospitals or other care facilities, remember to observe the following guidelines.

Abide by facility regulations. Be careful to abide by the rules of the organization and comply with any restrictions or instructions on the doors of the hospital room. An immediate and gracious response to any request of the staff is also important.

Check in at the desk. Before entering a patient's room, it is a good policy to check in at the nearest nursing desk to identify yourself and make sure it is a convenient time to visit. Be aware that you may not be able to acquire information about the condition of the patient there; regulations now require healthcare providers to protect the confidentiality of the patients.

Schedule visits appropriately. Visiting hours vary with the institution, although most facilities allow clergy visitation outside of normal visiting hours. It is generally preferable to avoid mealtimes and the evening hours (patients typically have the greatest number of personal visitors then).

Respect privacy issues. Knock on the patient's door and wait to be invited in. Be alert to signs that the individual needs privacy for a time, or that staff members are waiting for you to leave to take care of a medical procedure. Offer to leave the room if nurses come in to work with the patient.

Consider your surroundings when praying. If the patient you are visiting is in a shared room or ward, or the hour is late, you will want to pray quietly since other patients may be resting. Occasionally, after prayer has been offered for one in a shared environment, others in the vicinity will ask for prayer also. This is a good opportunity to reach out with compassion to others who have a need.

Take appropriate precautions. When visiting individuals with communicable diseases, we should be sure to take precautions so that we do not spread contagion. It is a good practice to thoroughly wash and sanitize your hands before visiting another patient or leaving the facility.

As ministers, we should be aware that some of our visits with the sick and suffering will be physically exhausting and emotionally draining to us personally. When we give of ourselves to support one who is dealing with pain, loss, or trauma, it will impact us too. However, God's Word enjoins us to "bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). As we do our best to fulfill this aspect of our ministerial calling, God himself will give us the strength and support that we need.

[1] The oil itself carries no supernatural or curative powers, but symbolizes the outpouring of God's Spirit.

Counsel for Ministers

Be careful not to equate trusting God with a refusal of professional medical care. The acceptance or refusal of medical care is a personal choice, not a Bible teaching. An individual can trust the Lord while in the hospital just as he or she trusts the Lord out of the hospital. We support and pray for one who prefers not to seek medical care in the same way that we support and pray for one who chooses to obtain medical care.

The anointing oil we use in praying for individuals is regular olive oil which has been placed upon a Bible and prayed over by two or more ministers to consecrate it. Some people may request oil for their own use at home, but we discourage any use other than that described in Scripture.

Rather than holding "healing services" in the Apostolic Faith organization, we encourage individuals to be prayed for following any church service. It is usual for two ministers to pray together for the sick person on those occasions. Customarily, the sick are prayed for on the platform, after indicating their desire for prayer by going forward and taking a seat on the platform near the ministers. However, if the person is unable to come to the front they may be prayed for wherever they are seated in the sanctuary. Individuals may also request to be prayed for where they live. We should always be accompanied by another minister or our spouse when praying in the home of one of the opposite gender when no one else will be present.

Both the saved and unsaved may be prayed for, but the unsaved ones should be urged to give their hearts to God since they have the promise of God that He will at the same time forgive their sins.

There are times when we visit individuals in a hospital or rest home who do not have many visitors, and primarily are being touched only as the staff does their work. Depending on the circumstances and personality of the patient, we should not hesitate to offer an extended handshake. Many times holding their hands for a while as we talk communicates our love and concern to them in a way that words cannot accomplish.

Comforting Thoughts to Share with the Afflicted

We will not all be healed instantly of every physical ailment, but a lack of healing does not equate to a lack of faith. James addressed the endurance of affliction, saying, "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience" (James 5:10). Patience and endurance is required of us throughout our Christian walk. Our responsibility is to follow the instructions in God's Word, and then leave the results with Him. He will answer according to His perfect will, and while we endure and are patient, He will give us grace for that time as well.

Revelation 12:10 tells us that Satan is the accuser of the brethren, and he does not spare us when we are sick and afflicted. He makes us feel that if we just had enough faith, we would be well. That accusation does not come from God—what comes from God *encourages* our faith! We must discern where such accusatory thoughts come from. Revelation 12:11 tells us, "And they overcame him [the devil] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." While we cannot defeat the devil in our own strength, the enemy of our souls has no power against the Blood of Jesus. When we feel the powers of darkness attacking with doubts, fear, or discouragement, we can plead the Blood of Jesus. We can ask for it to cover us—our mind, soul, and body—and shelter us from the onslaught of Satan. The devil cannot stand against the Blood!

There may be times when God answers prayers for instantaneous healing, but there may also be times when illness or disease is not taken away immediately. In 1 Peter 1:7 we read, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." While instantaneous healing may speak to hearts, faith in action during affliction is also a testimony that cannot be refuted. And if that is God's plan, He will maximize the impact of grace under pressure for His glory.

God often uses the experience of one who has endured affliction to comfort others. Who can understand what it is like to suffer in the grip of unrelenting pain, day after day? Who can empathize with the emotions that come with a life-threatening diagnosis? Who can understand the ways that Satan comes to attack those who are on the sickbed? Only one who has been there! (See 2 Corinthians 1:3-7). Times of suffering can open doors to minister to others who are hurting.

The Ministry of Comfort

Just as Jesus was touched with the feelings of our infirmities, ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ should be touched by the sorrows that people experience, and offer comfort in those times of need. When individuals we have a connection with go through "valley" experiences, we have a unique opportunity. As we reach out with solace and support, we offer those who are sorrowing a glimpse of the goodness of God, His love for them, His care for every aspect of their lives, and His unchanging character. We are living expressions of the fact that the One who has already "borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isaiah 53:4) is willing to walk with them through this difficult time.

There is one requirement for successful ministry to those who need comfort: we must have the genuine love of God in our hearts toward them. It is a privilege to make ourselves available where there is a need, and the encouragement we offer will not only be a blessing to those needing comfort, it will also be a blessing to us.

Those who are dying and those who have been recently bereaved are in special need of comfort and reassurance. Death and funerals may take place at a time when it is inconvenient for us to be present, but the Bible tells us that we are to "weep with them that weep" (Romans 12:15). Thus, we must be quick to temporarily set aside our other duties in order to reach out to the dying individual and/or close family.[1]

When death seems to be near for one we are visiting, we should remain with the individual and the family if at all possible. We are there as the representative of a loving God, as well as a personal friend. Our presence demonstrates the concern that is felt, not only by us, but by all the family of God. It will speak volumes to the suffering family, whether or not they verbalize their feelings.

If we are not present with the family at the time of death, we should go to the home as soon as possible to comfort the family and to extend the Christian compassion that means so much to those in sorrow. We do not need to address the subject of the funeral at that time. We initially go with the purpose of offering support and spiritual comfort; the necessary arrangements generally can begin the next day or so.

The Word of God is the best message we can take to those who are in need of comfort, assuring them that "The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him" (Nahum 1:7). It will be helpful to have some comforting passages in mind when we call upon one who is nearing eternity, or meet with the family of one whose loved one has just passed away. We should watch for an opportunity to offer to read an appropriate portion of Scripture.

As we converse with the sorrowing family, it is our privilege to point them beyond what we call death and into eternity. Dying is not the end—if we are saved, it is the door through which we pass into a larger, fuller life. There, God himself "shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4). As Christians, we have a hope of being reunited with our loved ones at the Rapture of the church (see 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), and this is a great comfort.

Pastors and ministers who have had experience in the ministry of comfort share the following principles.

Offer to pray. Bring the family members and all those who will be impacted by the loss before the Throne of God, asking specifically for God's comfort, peace, and strength for all those present in the difficult hours ahead. Our prayer will remind them of the place where they can find support: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deuteronomy 33:27). If the deceased individual was a Christian, thank God for the glorious day approaching when we will all be reunited in Heaven.

Be sensitive to non-verbal cues. The family may wish to have time alone with the one who has just passed away, or they may prefer to have someone with them for the first hour or two. Be alert to cues. If you are unable to discern the family's preference, feel free to quietly inquire.

Do not be afraid of emotion or tears. These are a natural human response to loss. Do not try to "cheer up" the bereaved. The grieving family members should not feel they must stifle their emotions in front of you. In fact, shared pain can sometimes be easier to bear, so grieve together. Jesus said, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4).

Let the family voice their feelings. This is not the time for us to share our regard for the person who has passed away. Although we will want to express our compassion for the family's loss, and offer to help in any way we can, we mainly should listen to the loved ones of the deceased, letting them say whatever they want.

Ask how you can help. Let the family know you would be happy to help in any way possible. Take care of practical details as you are able, especially if the close family members are having difficulty coping or knowing what to do next. (Do be careful not to assume a responsibility the family should deal with or make decisions that belong to the family, unless asked to do so.) You may wish to offer to contact the funeral home, or to accompany them when they go to make funeral arrangements.

Quietly assess unspoken needs. If immediate family members are elderly themselves, have small children, or have other circumstances which would limit their ability to make arrangements and function in the days following the death, consider ways the church family might be able to offer assistance. Perhaps you or a member of the congregation could make meals, arrange child care, take the bereaved spouse to appointments, help sort through financial matters, etc.

Know the stages of grief. Grief specialists have identified five stages that individuals generally go through as they process their loss. These stages are: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and finally, acceptance. While those with faith in God do not sorrow "as others which have no hope," (1 Thessalonians 4:13), even Christians may move through some or all of these stages in some manner. It is important to check in on the bereaved person throughout the steps of grieving.

Recognize that everyone copes differently. People deal with grief in different ways and on different schedules. Realize (and perhaps even verbalize) that there is no right or wrong way to go through the loss of a loved one. The important thing is to know that God understands, He cares, and He will walk with them through every step of this journey.

Continue support after the funeral. While there is usually an outpouring of support immediately following a death, family members may be left alone with their grief after the funeral is over. For some people, there is a tendency to withdraw from the rest of the world and shut down. It is very comforting when we reach out to those who grieve in the weeks and months following a death, letting them know that we are praying for them. A call, note, or email from time to time will be much appreciated. The first holidays and anniversaries without a loved one can be especially difficult, and it is heart-warming at such times to know that others remember your loss.

Talk about the deceased. Some may hesitate to discuss the deceased, supposing it will "remind" the bereaved of their loss and make them feel sad. However, though talking about the deceased may bring tears, many people say that it is comforting to know that others are thinking of the person who died, too. We should not be afraid to share funny or warm anecdotes that show how important to you or wonderfully special the deceased person was.

Be patient. The life and emotional landscape of one who has suffered loss changes—and sometimes that change is enormous. We may wish that he or she would "move on" but we cannot speed the process of recovery. We must let people heal at the pace that feels right for them; our role is not to judge but to do our best to support, comfort, and encourage them as they adjust. We know that "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30:5).

[1] For specific information regarding funeral services, see the section of this manual titled *Funeral and Memorial Services.*

Counsel for Ministers

Great care must be taken when it comes to financial matters at the time of a bereavement. Sometimes in the stressful period immediately following a death, family members hand over all sorts of decisions regarding financial matters, but later recognize that they relinquished too much of the decision-making because they were emotionally unsettled. It may be best to encourage the family to refrain from making any financial decisions beyond those that are immediately necessary until they have had some time to adjust to their loss.

The ministry of comfort is not restricted to times when a death has occurred. Many of these same principles of compassionate concern are necessary and useful when reaching out to families with wayward children, those facing diagnosis of a debilitating or disabling disease, or individuals who have been involved in an accident bringing injury or trauma, and other circumstances of this nature.

Following are some comforting Scripture passages that would be appropriate to read when you minister to those who have just suffered a loss:

- Psalm 23:1-6
- Psalm 46:1-11
- Psalm 91:1-16
- Psalm 103:1-6, 11-14, 17-18
- Psalm 138:1-3, 7-8
- Isaiah 26:3-4
- Isaiah 40:28-31
- Isaiah 43:1-3
- Matthew 6:25-27, 30-34
- John 14:1-3, 16-19, 27
- 2 Corinthians 4:17-18; 5:1
- Ephesians 3:14-21
- 1 Peter 1:3-9
- 1 Peter 4:12-13
- Revelation 21:2-7

Pastoral Transfers

The Apostolic Faith organization sends out pastors on an appointment system, rather than individuals applying for and being selected or hired by a local congregation or church board. This method is based upon the Biblical concept of being "sent" or appointed to a particular field of ministry by those in spiritual authority. In the Old Testament, Moses appointed Joshua to lead the Children of Israel into the Promised Land. The prophet Elijah, at God's direction, appointed Elisha to be his successor. In the New Testament, Jesus sent out the seventy disciples with the instruction to bring the good news of the kingdom "into every city and place, whither he himself would come" (Luke 10:1). The Apostles at Jerusalem sent Peter and John to minister to believers in Samaria (see Acts 8:14), and later commissioned Paul and Barnabus to serve as missionaries to the Gentile believers (see Acts 13:2-5).

As Apostolic Faith pastors, we are aware of the interim nature of our tenure at a given location. While we are in one location today, we may be called to serve in some other branch church in days to come, if Jesus tarries. We enter into pastoring with the understanding that our leadership of a particular congregation will not be a permanent assignment, but rather a position we are privileged to fill for a period of time as God deems best.

Churches and congregations within the Apostolic Faith organization are diverse in terms of numbers, proximity to other Apostolic Faith branches, accommodations for pastors, receptivity in the community, number of established Gospel workers, what the congregation is able to provide in terms of financial assistance for the pastor, and many other factors. There are times when we must set aside personal preferences and convenience for the good of the Gospel of Jesus Christ—more specifically, for the good of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Apostolic Faith organization where God has called us to serve. Whether there are eight, eighteen, or eighty in our congregation . . . whether we move into a beautiful pastorate or need to find and maintain our own home . . . whether we have several assisting ministers or will need to labor without help in that area . . . we can never afford to be anything less than completely willing to serve wherever the Lord puts us.

Transition to a new pastorate can be both exciting and a bit daunting for us and our families. The possibility of a new field and its opportunities brings anticipation, but leaving the known for the unknown can also bring a certain degree of apprehension. It is normal to have mixed feelings. We should keep in mind that transition begins before the move and continues after the move. The change of formal position can be marked by the day the moving vans pull up in front of our new home or when we stand behind the "new" pulpit for the first time as pastor—but transition is a more ongoing process for everyone involved.

There are several specific challenges that we likely will face when we relocate to a new pastorate or field of ministry.

The Personal Challenge. Moving will impact our spouses and family as well as ourselves, and we must keep their needs and emotions in mind as we relocate to a new field of service. Even though we are upbeat about the move, transition includes changes to important friendships and personal connections for our family members. If our children are school age, it will mean new schools. Job transfers may enter the picture for our spouse or older children. Everyone in the family will be adjusting to a new community, church family, and other new colleagues and friends. Without adequate rest, spiritual renewal, and support, these challenges will prove immensely more difficult. With attention to these essentials, a move can become an exciting and positive time for all.

Keep in mind that the congregation is also going through a challenge: that of adapting to a new pastor.

The Vocational Challenge. Things we took for granted or did in a certain way in our former location will likely need to be adjusted in a new setting. Learning to "read" the history, traditions, and culture of a new congregation is a primary challenge in the first year or so. Our job description as pastor may be similar from church to church, but the nuts and bolts of leadership in a new environment may be quite different. If there is a need for

us to take secular employment to support our family, we will be making an adjustment there as well.

*The Relational Challenge***.** Saying goodbye to the family of God in a location where we have lived and served for a number of years will bring an element of sadness for us and our family, and for the congregation we are leaving as well. This needs to be handled with sensitivity and wisdom. It will help if we are positive when we make the announcement to our congregation. We can acknowledge that change is difficult for all, but we should focus on the fact that we know the congregation will love, appreciate, and accept their new pastor just as they have loved, appreciated, and accepted us. We should be moderate in voicing either extreme elation or sadness regarding our move, as either one can create questions in the minds of those we interact with. When the move takes place, and we begin getting acquainted with a new church family, we need to realize that the congregation is no doubt missing their former pastor. We can frankly acknowledge that he or she leaves big shoes to fill, but that we are looking forward to life in our new church group.

Pastors who have gone through the relocation process offer suggestions for a departing pastor.

- Do your best to make sure the church and parsonage are clean when you leave, and that appropriate repairs and updating have been done or are in process.
- Leave a file or notebook containing basic information that will make the new pastor's relocation easier. This file should include such items as:
- The current meeting schedule and any extra activities such as youth camp, mission and home meetings, jail services, etc.
- Maintenance and warranty information on church property and equipment
- Deferred maintenance projects and cost estimates for upcoming needs
- Vehicle information
- Information about the parsonage, including appliance manuals, warranties, purchase information, etc.
- Contact information and personnel data (such as birthdays and anniversaries) about church members and workers
- Community resources and contacts such as schools, hospitals, medical and dental recommendations, maintenance companies the church has used
- A list of who does regular tasks in the church such as flower arrangements, bulletin boards, decorating the church, housing overnight guests, etc.
- A list of ordinance supplies and information concerning storage and care
- Express your confidence that the new pastor will fit into the church family well, and that they will enjoy having him or her as their pastor.

For pastors who are moving to a new location, the following suggestions will help as you assume your new role.

- Take time to learn, assess, and evaluate how things operate in your new location before making changes. As much as possible, maintain the status quo for a time at least—there is no point trying to fix something that is not broken!
- Learn everyone's names as quickly as possible, including the children.
- Get acquainted with the history of the church. You need to be able to tell the old, old stories as well as anyone.
- Never express criticism or disapproval with the methods or decisions of the prior pastor.

- Do not be too hasty in returning for a "visit" to your former pastorate. Give that congregation an opportunity to adjust to their new pastor.
- Pray for your congregation and for guidance day by day.

Congregations naturally go through periods of birth, growth, maturity, decline, and at times, churches may even be closed for one reason or another. Pastors come and go within this cycle. The writer of Ecclesiastes points out that there are times and seasons for "every purpose under the heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1), so our tenure can be viewed as a divinely-appointed "season" in the congregation's life. The Biblical concept of *kairos*—defined as God's perfect timing—is an important concept in the time of pastoral transition.[1] We believe God directs when ministerial relocations are considered because He is intimately concerned with how the Gospel work moves forward. That belief allows us to say with Mordecai of old, "Who knoweth whether thou [we] art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14).

Apostolic Faith pastors have a long history of willingly relocating to new locations where they thrive and are a blessing to their new church families. Apostolic Faith congregations have a long history of welcoming new pastors into their midst and supporting them wholeheartedly. With God's help and guidance, we have proved over the course of many years that even moves which present challenges can be accomplished smoothly and to the glory of God.

[1] In Romans 13:11, Paul uses the word *kairos* when he reminds the believers in Rome, "Now it is high time [kairos] to awake out of sleep." *Kairos* time, God's fateful and appointed time, thus gives a sense of urgency to *kronos*, or chronological time.

Counsel for Ministers

As pastors and ministers who may be transferred from one location to another, it is important for us to understand and trust that God is leading the decision-making process. If we do not, it would be easy to view pastoral relocations through the "lens" of our own perspectives and perhaps to question why decisions were made.

A shift of pastors is not made lightly, nor is it based on mere casual consideration. The process of assessing the needs, evaluating the possibilities, and bringing the matter before the Lord typically narrows down the field to very few options—perhaps only one. When we are asked to relocate, we are certainly free to offer input and even express concerns. But then we must put the matter in God's hands and pray that He will have His way and give direction to those who are making the transition decisions.

It would be idealistic to expect that if God is in it, everyone would be delighted when asked to move. However, we must always be willing. God has a purpose and plan that we cannot always see or understand. As ministers and pastors, we must trust Him to execute His plan, knowing that it will always be the best plan for His people (see Jeremiah 29:11).

A mention may be made here about subordination. Paul observed, "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (1 Corinthians 14:32). We must subordinate ourselves to the Holy Spirit, for it is He who is our Guide and Leader. That also means we will subordinate ourselves to those whom the Holy Spirit has placed in authority over the work of God, for the Holy Spirit always works through His appointed representatives. We may not always know by direct revelation from the Holy Spirit the instructions and leadings that He has given to those who lead in the Gospel work, but we can have full confidence in their leadership, knowing they are led by God.

Retirement and Transitioning to a Supporting Role

Our roles in the service of the Lord evolve with the passing of time and changing circumstances. As pastors and ministers, we should be open to the blessings of growth and fulfillment that the Holy Spirit offers in new situations, and that includes the point in time when we retire. Every member of the body of Christ can serve the church in some capacity and should be encouraged to do so faithfully. For former pastors, that role may be an active one, perhaps as an assisting minister, or it may be more "behind the scenes." Either way, retirement from active pastoring should not be considered an *end* of service, but rather a *transition* to a new field of service.

It is prudent to look ahead and begin to make plans for moving into a supporting role well ahead of the day of our retirement. Daily challenges keep most of us busy, and in addition, we believe the Lord could return to earth at any moment. Thus, it is easy to postpone giving serious consideration to our future. But as pastors, it is important to make preparation for retirement. Scripture is clear that we are to be wise stewards of the resources God has given us, and this includes taking steps that will facilitate a transition into the next phase of our lives.

Pastors must plan for retirement just like other employed individuals. One important decision that will need to be made is where we will live. It is not usually advisable to remain where we last served as pastor, although that possibility is not necessarily ruled out. Family considerations may enter into this decision, especially if we have children. If financial circumstances allow it, we may wish to begin building equity in a home where we could spend our retirement years after we withdraw from active pastoring. Wherever we decide to relocate, we should make sure that we position ourselves so we can easily stay involved in the Lord's work.

There are other aspects of pre-planning for retirement that will help the eventual transition go smoothly.

- Pray about the timing of your retirement. Unless health considerations or some other definite circumstance dictates an immediate cessation of duties, there are a number of aspects that may impact the exact date.
- Discuss with your spouse and your District Superintendent or the Superintendent General the when, where, why, and how of your retirement in advance of making a final decision. Be open to their input and suggestions.
- Consider attending retirement workshops that will offer strategies regarding health concerns, legal matters, insurance or long-term care options, use of time, and family issues.
- Review your financial status. Examine your insurance policies, bank accounts, funeral plans, and investments to determine if you are on a solid footing financially, and make any necessary adjustments.[1] Do not expect the organization to be able to support you. Begin building a nest egg or contributing to a retirement plan as soon as possible.
- As you anticipate retirement, begin to build friendships, hobbies, and interests while it is still some distance away. These will give you some sense of continuity when it is time to leave a full-time career of ministry.
- Ultimately, the day will come. Pastors who have already moved into the retirement phase of life offer some thoughts regarding the transition phase.
- Do not announce your plans to retire too far in advance. Consult with your District Superintendent or the Superintendent General to determine how and when the announcement will be made. The timing will coordinate with announcements concerning the pastor who will fill the pastorate you vacate.

- Make a solid commitment to do something in the work of the Lord for as long as you are able.
- Maintain a positive attitude about retirement. Remember, God still has a work for you to do once your active pastoring days are over.
- Set a good example for the younger ministers who will follow you in how to retire gracefully!

After you have retired:

- Be positive. Remember that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).
- Stay involved. Attend the church services, pray around the altars, and participate in ministry opportunities as they are offered and you are able.
- If you are staying where you formerly served as a pastor, support the new pastor and encourage the congregation to do so as well. Understand that changes will be made, and stand behind those changes and decisions. Be prepared to refer parishioners who call for advice to the new pastor.
- Be available if your successor asks for help or information, but wait to be asked, and offer your counsel carefully.
- Avoid discussions with other members of the congregation related to the current pastor and congregational issues.
- Understand that feelings of sadness, loss, and even grief are normal with any major life change, and accept them. However, guard against self-pity and Satan's insinuations that you are useless, forgotten, or "on the shelf."
- Follow protocol if former parishioners ask you to officiate at their weddings, dedicate their child, or hold the funeral for a family member. For events held in a local church, direct the requesting party to the local pastor, letting them know that they can feel free to request your involvement in the event. For events outside of the church, you may participate if you wish, but it is good to let the local pastor know that the family has requested your involvement.

In conclusion, growing older is part of life. At some point if the Lord tarries, we will no longer be able to do the work of pastoral ministry on a full-time basis. If we pray and prepare for that day, retirement and transitioning to a supporting role in the work of the Lord can be a smooth and rewarding process.

[1] For more information on this subject, see the section of this Minister's Manual titled *Financial Stewardship.*

Ministerial Relationships

Relationship with Spouse

God has a definite plan for our marriages.[1] According to Scripture, marriage is a covenant relationship which establishes a bond between a man and a woman that is dissolved only when death causes the inevitable separation. The Biblical description speaks of a deep and lasting intimacy and commitment, a bond between us and our spouses that is compared to the union between Christ and His Church.[2]

For a number of reasons, maintaining the health of our marriages is vital for those of us who are serving the Lord in the ministry.

First, marriage and family issues are specifically addressed in the description of qualifications for a bishop, pastor, or elder. Those who serve in leadership roles in the church are to be "blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour….one that ruleth well his own house" (1 Timothy 3:2, 4).[3] If we cannot successfully interact in our own homes, how can we lead the Church?

Maintaining a good marriage is also important in terms of our personal spiritual well-being. The Bible instructs men to keep their marriages in order that their "prayers be not hindered" (1 Peter 3:7). As we labor in the field of ministry, there will be many times when we need to pray for divine help and guidance. When such times come, it is imperative that nothing hinders our prayers.

In 1 Peter 5:3, the Apostle Peter points out that those in positions of spiritual authority are to be examples to the people. The pastor's marriage is expected to serve as a model of a functioning Christian marriage. As others observe our relationships with our spouses, our love and commitment to each other should be evident.

Finally, as ministers and pastors, we must keep our marriages strong because the success of our relationship with our spouses will have a direct impact on the success of our ministry. Paul said, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). Our worldwide work will only be as strong as the marriages of the ministers of this work.

Some ministers have asked, "Which comes first, our marriage or our ministry?" Perhaps the best answer to that question is, "They are inseparable." To sacrifice one for the sake of the other is to damage both. Problems arise when we fail to see the importance of the partnership which we entered into with our spouses.

Though the demands upon a minister or pastor's time are significant, we must take great care not to neglect our marriages because of our responsibilities in the Lord's work. When we accepted the divine call to the ministry, we were aware that the work of the Lord would entail certain duties and obligations. When we entered into the covenant of marriage, we were aware that marriage would entail certain duties and obligations. It is vitally important not to compromise our commitment in either of these areas of our lives. Whether we have been married for five years or fifty, we need to continually make an effort to strengthen and cultivate our relationship with our spouse.

There are a number of ways we can do this.

Make a definite and ongoing commitment to the success of our marriage. Our marriage relationship must be a top priority in our lives. A relationship is a work in progress, and it needs attention and effort to develop and maintain.

Resolve conflict in a godly manner. It is inevitable that conflict will arise on occasion—we should not expect to agree on everything. An important part of resolving conflicts is being respectful of our spouse and acknowledging his/her feelings. It is important to keep in mind Biblical principles of kindness, patience, and treating others as we would have others treat us.

Communicate carefully. Communication can be destructive or productive, so we should do our best to speak directly, clearly, honestly and respectfully. Ephesians 4:29 establishes the principle of communication that edifies. This involves listening to each other without judgment, and focusing on what our spouse is saying, as well as expressing our own feelings in a positive, godly way. And sometimes we must learn to simply refrain from speaking, asking God to "Set a watch…before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Psalm 141:3).

Make time for each other. If we wait for a convenient season, it will never come. Time must be set aside to be with our spouses—even written into our schedule if need be! Remember, the marriage commitment can be damaged by over-commitment and fatigue. It is important to reserve time and energy for our spouse.

Cultivate spiritual unity. Spiritual unity enhances romance, and there are steps we can take to deepen our fellowship. Make it a practice to pray together. Reading the Bible together, discussing spiritual concerns or insights, sharing spiritual goals, and worshipping together also unites us.

Pay attention to each other. As the years come and go, it is easy to become complacent in our relationship and take our spouses for granted. Make it a point to notice and celebrate each other's accomplishments, and support each other during the good times and the hard times.

Esteem and appreciate each other. It is always best to focus on our spouse's strengths instead of his or her weaknesses. Paul reminds us in 1 Thessalonians 5:11, "Edify one another." Simply saying a sincere "thank you" can go a long way toward making our spouse feel special and appreciated.

Have fun together. Ecclesiastes 9:9 says, "Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest." Be fun to live with! Make good memories with each other, and rehearse those memories often.

Show affection. Ephesians 5:25 says, "Husbands, love your wives…" Notice that this is a command! Some may think they are not naturally demonstrative, but anyone can learn to be affectionate. We should both show and verbalize our love for our spouse every day.

Recognize differences. We need to realize that our spouse's physical and emotional needs are different from our own. Men and women are different because God made us that way! We must learn to respect those differences and accommodate them.

Be willing to compromise. Negotiation is important in any relationship, but it is especially important in marriage. When we differ on an issue, we should discuss the problem calmly and look for ways to meet each other somewhere in the middle.

Practice forgiveness. There may be times when our spouse makes a mistake or says or does something hurtful. If we constantly rehearse past offenses, it is difficult to have a mutually loving relationship. Colossians 3:12-13 provides a good guideline: " Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

Pray for each other. There are never-ending needs in the ministry and in the family of God. However, our responsibility to hold our spouse up in prayer should come first. Their strength, stability, encouragement, and spiritual walk with God should be just as important to us as our own. There are few things more encouraging than the awareness that our mate, who loves us as no one else does, prays for us as for himself or herself.

In conclusion, we must never allow the pace of ministry to distract us from our spouse, the one we have promised to cherish "until death do us part." Care, sacrifice, and nurture must be at the heart of our marriages, so that we not only sustain each other but bear witness to the church and to the world of the reality of Christ and His presence in our lives.

[1] For more on the topic of marriage, see the section of this Ministers Manual titled *The Sanctity of Marriage.*

[2] See Ephesians 5:22-32.

[3] See also Titus 1:5-9.

Relationship with Children and Family

Parenting in the parsonage is much like parenting in any godly Christian home. As ministers and pastors, we face the same issues that parents in our congregations face when it comes to family relationships. We need to find ways to communicate with our spouses, train our children, deal appropriately with our schedules, and face challenges in a godly and overcoming manner.

However, just as ministers and pastors face some specific issues in keeping their marriages healthy, there are specific challenges related to raising families while serving in full-time ministry. There are also distinct opportunities! As we consider these unique aspects, we can be assured that just as God called us into ministry, He is involved in the lives of our family members. Our spouses and children are not incidental parts of our lives. They are vital pieces in God's design for our labor for Him, and have a role to fill in the particular church and time in which we minister. That is one reason why maintaining healthy family relationships is so important for those in the ministry.

The Word of God offers other reasons as well. Managing our families well is specifically mentioned in the requirements of a bishop, pastor, or elder. An individual who serves the church in any of these roles is to manage his household well, "having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)" (1 Timothy 3:4-5). Of course, the time comes when our children assume direction of their own lives. However, careful guidance of them during their formative years is imperative, as indicated by Paul's insistence that it is a minister's duty to control his children.

We also must lead our own families well in order to serve as a model to those in our congregations. Paul told Timothy, "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation [behavior], in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12). That exhortation would certainly include being an example in our home and family life. Our lives are the most influential sermon we will ever preach, so it is vital that we set a good example in this area.

The fact our children are related to the pastor does not take away their normalcy nor their individual personalities and traits. It also does not insulate them from the issues that any young person faces in life. Thus, we must invest time and energy in building a healthy home life. Like all Christian parents, we need to focus on key principles of successful child rearing such as love, example, discipline, protection, consistency, and availability.

Some simple "do's and don'ts" for parenting in the parsonage can help us navigate the unique aspects of pastor/family relationships successfully. First, let us look at some things we *should* do:

Be careful when discussing church members. We want them to love and respect the saints of God, so it is important to speak positively about our congregations in front of our children, whether they are toddlers or young adults. As little ones grow older, they will learn that everyone is human and that we all have strengths and weaknesses. Even then, we must be careful not to talk condescendingly, disrespectfully, or judgmentally. It is important to focus on the good qualities of people, and guard against focusing on problems and concerns.

Strive for balance. Although the demands of ministry exist, secular employment also makes demands. In either case, Jesus did not ask us to labor at the expense of our families. There is no requirement to choose between our family and our flock. Rather, we need to concentrate on finding balance. Jesus sometimes "withdrew himself into the wilderness" (Luke 5:16), retiring from the crowds and the demands of ministry for periods of prayer and personal refreshing. We must develop that ability as well, though we keep in mind that the ministry does at times require self-sacrifice and putting others' needs ahead of our own.

Encourage participation in church activities. We should do our best to provide opportunities for our children to be engaged in the Gospel work and church activities. Make appropriate aspects of ministry an enjoyable family activity just as you would enjoy each other's company at a purely recreational activity. One minister took his young son on occasional visitations, and found that patients enjoyed the child's company as much as the pastor's! Learning music is a wonderful way to encourage future involvement. Visit other branch churches when possible, and promote friendships between your children and the young people in those churches. This is especially important if there are few peers their age in their home church.

Emphasize the positives of being a pastor's family. Although there are responsibilities in being a part of leadership, there are abundant privileges also, and we should do our best to place emphasis upon this aspect. For example, pastors often can arrange their daytime schedules to accommodate their child's activities. Not all parents can do that! Our children will have the opportunity to develop friendships with the young and the old, with pastors and Gospel workers from other cities, and with many saints of God who can be inspirations and examples to them. They will visit churches and meet people they might never have visited otherwise. Along with these physical advantages, our children have a valuable opportunity to see faith at work in the lives of others. When God answers prayer and moves in the lives of congregation members, the extra spiritual proximity to such outpourings can be of tremendous spiritual benefit to our children.

Compensate for the negatives. Our children will learn that sometimes life in a pastor's home requires sacrifice on the family's part. We should express appreciation for their cooperation when schedules need to be adjusted or plans temporarily set aside because of an urgent need in the congregation, and look for ways to compensate. If we are called to serve as a pastor in a remote or rural area, feelings of loneliness and isolation can be real issues that call for our innovation and creativity as parents. Since under these circumstances, family life is the social life, capitalize on this to build close relational bonds through shared memories.

Schedule time for family. As pastors, we generally have flexibility in how we schedule our time. If we build family outings, one-on-one celebrations, and annual vacations into our schedule, putting them on the calendar just like any other appointment, this will indicate to our children that we place a real value on spending time with them. Then, when parishioners call for an appointment that is not an emergency, we can schedule these around the times already set aside for family.

Expect some opposition. Those who lead will face opposition. Jesus did. The disciples did. At times the occasional criticism that comes our way will be warranted, but at other times it will be without merit. Our families will be unaware of details but will always be concerned for us and observant. Therefore, we must respond in a godly manner, without letting it affect our spirits. We can set a positive example before our families of being longsuffering, patient, and kind—and then they will benefit rather than being negatively impacted.

Set boundaries. Set and clearly communicate boundaries to your church family to protect your family time. Our homes are our place of refuge, and it is not necessary to post an "open house" sign on the front lawn. Naturally, a good minister will always respond to genuine emergencies. However, it is important to define an emergency. If we are candid with our congregation about our need to set aside time blocks for our families, this will diffuse misunderstandings before they develop and often prevent disappointment regarding our availability.

Learn to say "no." Depending upon personal temperament, we may be inclined to say "yes" to every request, or to take upon ourselves every task in the church that is not being done—or done "right." This approach to serving can seriously affect our family life. We should learn to delegate responsibility as needed, and take the time to train, empower, and encourage others to participate around the church. Not only will this give us more time with our family, but it will give others the opportunity to enjoy the blessing of serving.

Encourage everyone in the family to fill their designated role. Family unity is not fully possible unless each member is filling the role designed for them by God. As pastors, we depend upon our spouses for support, encouragement, and understanding. Our spouses depend upon us for attention, conversation, encouragement, and spiritual leadership. Our children depend upon us for nurture, teaching, protection,

provision, and a godly example in faithfulness, compassion for others, and numerous other Christ-like qualities. As we all do our best to function in a God-pleasing manner in our respective roles, we can be sure that Christ is indeed the Head of our household, and is guiding and helping us in our family's journey together.

Now, let's review some things we *should not* do:

Do not act on information from your children or other members of your family. It never pays to react publicly to anything that family members tell us privately. Whatever they observed, or whatever was told to them, if the matter truly needs our intervention, we can be sure that God will bring it to our attention in another manner.

Use extreme caution in taking on your children's battles. Inevitably, differences will arise between our children and other young people in our congregation or local community. While we can advise our children regarding the steps they should take, we should be very cautious about intervening directly; in the majority of cases, the children will resolve the matter on their own. If we approach the other child or his/her parents, the situation could very well escalate and ramifications or hurt feelings linger for the duration of our stay at that location. We want to be a guide rather than an advocate for our children.

Do not share problems. As pastors and ministers, we are called upon to deal with a variety of challenges that arise within the church. Those issues should never be discussed in front of our children. They should not be given either the burden or the right to hear about pastoral concerns or issues.

Do not have unreasonable expectations. Just because our two-year-old or twelve-year-old happens to live in the parsonage with us, we should not expect them to behave in a manner beyond their years. We must be understanding and patient with their maturity level and development, rather than applying impossibly high standards for behavior. And while we definitely want to teach our children to be respectful, obedient, and kind, we must never fall into the trap of requiring our children to live up to other people's expectations.

Do not show favoritism—and do not go to the other extreme either. We must never favor our children or put them into positions of responsibility in the church when they are too young or spiritually inexperienced. On the other hand, they should not be restricted from participation or have awards withheld simply because they are the "pastor's child" and the privilege or award should go to someone else.

Throughout Scripture, God is called our Father. In the New Testament, Jesus is called our Bridegroom. The two most powerful relationships in our world are those of husband and wife, and parent and child. If God created these relationships and identifies Himself in these roles, it is obvious that He places a high priority on these identities. We should too!

Our first ministry field is our home. John said that he had no greater joy than to hear that his children walked in truth (3 John 4). Balancing ministry demands with the needs of our spouses and children presents its challenges, but if we have the right attitude and approach, family life can more than just survive. It can thrive!

Counsel for Ministers

We cannot expect absolute perfection in every aspect of personal life. It would be ideal if every minister's home was perfectly peaceful, we all had good paying jobs or successful businesses, bills were never incurred, and cars never broke down. Life generally does not work that way for any of us. Some children quietly rebel, and some children quite visibly rebel. Businesses fail or health collapses, and financial hardships come as a result. Circumstances occur over which we have very little if any control. However, God knows, and He can supply grace and courage so we can address even these challenges in a manner that is worthy of our vocation as divinely-called ministers.

Relationship with Other Ministers

There is a unique bond of fellowship between those of us who work shoulder to shoulder in the Apostolic Faith organization where God has called us to serve, and this relationship is vital to our success. Romans 12:4-5 points out that just as there are many parts to our physical bodies, there are many parts to the Body of Christ. God designed it so that we function together and are dependent upon each other, and this is especially true for us as ministers and pastors.

As we labor in our respective fields of service, mutual support of each other offers a number of significant benefits.

The blessing of encouragement. Proverbs 15:23 tells us, "A word spoken in due season, how good is it!" In many of Paul the Apostle's letters, he inserts words of appreciation for someone who put forth an effort to encourage or "refresh" him. Jonathan and his armor bearer, Aaron and Hur, Joshua and Caleb, Paul and Silas, and many other individuals from Biblical history were among those who labored together, and what a support these men of God were for each other! Often, God did not conquer by one individual, but He gave victories to two or more individuals working side by side. And that is the key to victory for all of us.

The blessing of prayer support. When someone in our ranks is going through a difficult time, it does not escape notice. We pray that God will buoy up those who encounter such difficulties, knowing that prayer changes things. God's Word tells us that while one can chase a thousand, two will "put ten thousand to flight" (Deuteronomy 32:30). Many times the challenges that face us as ministers cannot be shared with our family or the flock of God. However, God promised to respond to prayer, so those who lead His people need to pray with and for one another. There is power in united prayer!

The blessing of godly counsel. We can learn from the experiences of others. Whatever we face in our field of service for the Lord, very likely one of our ministerial peers has been through a similar circumstance. We read, "Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established" (Proverbs 15:22). Older ministers have insight and perspective based upon years of personal experience. The writer of Proverbs 27:17 points out that "Iron sharpeneth iron," and for those who labor in leadership roles, the guidance and advice of seasoned Gospel veterans in the ministry is an invaluable resource.

The blessing of fellowship. We are not standing alone—we have a great support group around us. Our fellowship as ministers of the Gospel goes much deeper than a common involvement in our church organization, or shared goals and direction. While those aspects enter into our comradeship, our bond is a unity rooted in the same deep understanding and shared experiences in the Gospel. It is a powerful force and a spiritual reality.

The Bible says that part of walking "worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" is the necessity of endeavoring "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1, 3). The fact that we are all sanctified individuals does not mean that unity is automatic. The word *endeavor* in this verse implies diligent effort, or "striving earnestly." We must give serious attention to preserving oneness between us.

Differences of opinion will arise because God did not make us clones of each other, nor remove all our individual characteristics and preferences when He called us into the ministry. However, we cannot preach harmony without being in harmony. There are a number of guidelines that will help us to preserve the unity between ourselves and our fellow ministers.

Be mindful that it is Satan who accuses. According to Revelation 12:10, Satan is the "accuser of the brethren." The enemy of our souls is the one who brings doubts and fears, and undermines our unity. He is the one who accuses us to our peers and accuses our peers to us. The devil is a liar, and we should never forget that. If a doubtful comment comes to us about one of our fellow ministers, we have an opportunity to deflate or

inflate it. The Bible says "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out" (Proverbs 26:20). We can either stoke the flame or douse it with water.

Respect differences. After we work with one another for a decade or two, we know each other well. We know one another's strengths and we know one another's weaknesses. Let us respect our differences, and remember that what we might identify as "personality flaws" are the aspects where God is working and helping that one to grow. The fact is, we are all works in progress, so it serves us well to regard others with compassion and mercy with respect to personality flaws.

Be subject to one another. Our opinions will not be the only perspective. God's Word instructs us to submit to one another. Paul cautioned in 1 Corinthians 14:32 that "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets," so all matters of the church might be handled decently and in order.

Stay out of others' challenges. From time to time, we may become aware of challenges that have arisen in other branch churches or with individuals who are not in our local congregations. It is best to refuse to pick up problems that do not pertain to us, unless the other pastor comes directly to us for counsel or advice. We can then voice our suggestions, but the matter still should be left in the local pastor's hands for resolution.

Refuse to criticize. We should take care not to discuss or focus upon what we perceive as the weaknesses or missteps of another minister. Let us operate with the same spirit as David had when he said, "The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed" (1 Samuel 26:11).

Keep confidences. As ministers, we must respect the confidences of our fellow ministers. If a brother or sister minister shares personal burdens or challenges, this is done for the purpose of securing our counsel and prayer. We have no license to share this information with others.

Remember that we are examples. Our congregations observe how we ministers interact. They hear. We are examples to our congregations, and they will follow where we lead. If we make obvious our caring, support, and appreciation of our peers and our organization as a whole, they will be much more likely to follow suit.

As ministers of the Gospel, we come from different backgrounds. We have different personalities, and different talents. It is a good and amazing thing how God takes us as unique individuals, and through the attributes of lowliness, longsuffering, meekness, and forbearance, helps us to work together as one. Together, we make a mighty army. We may be relatively few in number, but we are mighty in desire, mighty in passion, mighty in purpose, and together we are one body. We are loyal one to another, we are subject one to another, we do our best to honor one another, and we stand beside one another.

The devil will try to divide us, but he will not succeed, because we have our direction from Heaven, so we carry on. We are in this work together as one in Christ, and with that purpose we can be sure that God accomplishes what He desires through us.

Counsel to Ministers

There are two aspects that set us apart as an organization: our holiness way of life, which is based upon the doctrine of the Latter Rain Gospel, and our unity. We should not be surprised if Satan attempts to attack us in these two areas—and the attacks will not always come from outside. Paul cautioned the saints at Philippi, declaring that after his departure "shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise…" (Acts 20:29-30). We want to be wise to the fact that ministers are not above the possibility of failure. We must always be conscious of our mandate from Heaven to preserve and preach the pure Gospel that has been given to us without wavering or compromise.

If we observe a spiritual misstep on the part of a fellow minister, we should go first to our brother with the intent of facilitating correction. If he does not receive the correction, we should let him know that it is our obligation to take the matter to the district superintendent under whom he is working, or to the Superintendent General. If we become aware of moral failure on the part of a fellow minister, we should offer to go with him to address the matter with his district superintendent or the Superintendent General. In both cases, we must be sure that our actions are done in a spirit of meekness (see Galatians 6:1), and for the sole purpose of protecting the integrity of our work.

We should make every effort to visually and audibly support other ministers when they are preaching. We should keep our attention directed at the one who is standing behind the pulpit. If we want our fellow ministers to say "amen" when we are preaching, we should do the same for them.

Relationship with Workers in the Church

Laboring together in the work of the Lord with the saints of God is a wonderful privilege. Gospel workers—the members of our congregations who serve the church in various capacities—are the backbone of our organization. As pastors and ministers, our relationship with them is that of companions in ministry.

Paul the Apostle often referred with affection to those who labored in the various Gentile churches of his day, commending them and expressing appreciation for their support and efforts in the cause of Christ. For example, he referenced the house of Stephanas in Achaia, commenting that "they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints" (1 Corinthians 16:15). He referred to the believers in Philippi as "my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown" (Philippians 4:1), admonishing them to stand fast in the Lord. He told the workers at Colosse that he continually thanked God for them, "praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints" (Colossians 1:3-4). Clearly, his connection with those who worked with him in the Early Church was one of warm affection and spiritual fellowship. What a beautiful example this provides for us as we labor with the saints of God in our day!

Our relationship with the Gospel workers in our congregations must be built upon several key components. These include:

Shared vision and commitment. Those who participate in the work of the Lord in any capacity must first be spiritually qualified. In writing to the church at Philippi, Paul spoke of Clement and other fellow laborers, "whose names are in the book of life" (Philippians 4:3). Our common salvation is the basis for our shared vision and united efforts in the spread of this Latter Rain Gospel.

Mutual trust. Trust is the cornerstone of any good relationship. The workers in our congregations must have confidence in us, knowing that they can depend upon us to behave with integrity and faithfulness to God in every situation. Paul said that those who worked together with God were to give no offense in any thing, "that the ministry be not blamed: but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God" (2 Corinthians 6:3-4). We in turn must show trust and confidence in them.

Mutual submission. When Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, he pled with them to "submit yourselves… to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth" (1 Corinthians 16:16). The Apostle Peter voiced the same theme when he admonished, "All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5).[1] Humility indicates that we are assuming a proper role in our relationship to others, never operating on the basis of self-assertion or personal importance. Humility builds healthy interdependence between us and the workers of the church. We understand that we need them, and they understand that they need us—because that is how God designed the church to operate.

We should view those who labor with us in the Lord's work as worthy of our service, and our service is to guide them in following God. At times, our local church structure requires the appointment of individuals to certain roles such as department heads and team leaders. This can make it easy for us as pastors and ministers to think of ourselves more as employers than as guides. But if the Holy Spirit, from His high position and authority, can still function as a Guide (John 16:13), we should do the same.

Our attitude toward the Gospel workers who labor with us should demonstrate certain characteristics. These include:

- *Loyalty.* We should evidence faithfulness and devotion to one another, supporting and defending each other. Nothing pulls a team closer together or strengthens the bonds of loyalty more than love. It defends against dissension, and builds morale. If we truly care for the people of God, the church's inner core of workers will feel that and respond.

- *Appreciation.* We should be quick to recognize merit in those who labor with us. Genuine expressions of appreciation and commendation go a long way toward building relationships.
- *Fairness.* We must be careful of making comparisons, but respect the efforts of all, being careful to treat everyone equitably and with respect.
- *Empathy.* We should do our best to identify with those who labor with us by putting ourselves in their place, and endeavoring to see things from their point of view.
- *Thoughtfulness.* We should always be considerate of others, applying Christ's words, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke 6:31) to our dealings with others.

When God called us into the ministry, we were given not only an amazing privilege, but a serious responsibility. First of all, we obviously must *lead*. Forward progress does not occur unless someone leads the way, and that is the role God has given us as ministers and pastors. Moses led the Children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt. Joseph's leadership spared Egypt and God's people from devastating famine. Solomon led the people in the building of the temple at Jerusalem. Any endeavor in the work of the Lord will require leadership.[2]

We must *equip* the workers who labor with us. Our primary effort will be to equip them spiritually, encouraging them to spiritual maturity in the Lord. However, we will also need to provide what they need in a material sense, as God directs. Gideon equipped his band with trumpets, lamps, and pitchers to wage war against the Midianites (see Judges 7:16-17). We have a responsibility to facilitate the efforts of the workers, providing them with what they need for success to the best of our abilities.

We need to *communicate* effectively. Dialog between us and our coworkers is vital—and effective communication includes listening as well as expressing ourselves understandably. When expectations and goals are clearly transmitted and fully understood, progress is expedited.

We have a responsibility to *encourage.* There is life-changing power in encouragement! When David's life was in danger from Saul, Jonathan stepped in with loving support (see 1 Samuel 20). The prophet Haggai encouraged the leaders of his day, saying, "Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts" (Haggai 2:4). Jesus himself set a wonderful example of encouraging words when He walked this earth, telling His disciples and those who followed Him, "Be of good cheer… (Matthew 14:27), "Be not afraid" (Mark 6:50), and "Be of good comfort" (Matthew 9:22). Encouragement has strengthened many an individual to progress and excel in the Gospel.

We are called to *support* those who labor with us. Paul wrote to the Galatians, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). We need to be behind the workers with prayers, faith, and backing.

We should make it a point to *labor together* with those who are working for the Lord in our local church. Notice that Nehemiah did not just issue instructions to those who built the walls around Jerusalem. He worked shoulder to shoulder with them, sharing their discomforts and their dangers.

Finally, we have a great responsibility to *be an example* to the workers in our congregation. We must demonstrate Christian living before the members of our congregations in areas such as:

- *Serving as unto the Lord.* Paul instructed the servants at Ephesus to serve "With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men" (Ephesians 6:7). That would certainly apply to us as servants of the Lord.

- *Willingness.* Peter exhorted the elders to feed the flock of God, and to take the oversight of them "not by constraint, but willingly" (1 Peter 5:2). We are to be examples in serving God out of eagerness to serve, not out of obligation.
- *Dependence upon God.* "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament" (2 Corinthians 3:5-6). Any competence we may have is from God, and we must be examples of leaning on Him and acknowledging that we are nothing in ourselves.
- *Faithfulness*. Paul told the Corinthians, "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2), and challenged them, "Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). The Gospel deserves our dedication, so we want to model reliability and responsibility.
- *Selflessness.* "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Philippians 2:4). The world says we should know ourselves, express ourselves, be ourselves, and take care of ourselves. However, God instructs us to know others, listen to others, live for others, and take care of others. We should proactively focus on others.

In conclusion, it is good to remind ourselves that we are all "labourers together with God" (1 Corinthians 3:9). We want to encourage every participant in the work of the Lord to develop, to innovate, to learn from one another, all the while feeling loved, supported, and affirmed. Security and trust are the result when we put into practice leading through love, for genuine caring speaks volumes. As we stand heart to heart—united in faith, purpose, doctrine, and loyalty to God and to one another—we enable every worker to be their best as we work together for the salvation of souls and the furtherance of God's kingdom!

[1] See also Philippians 2:3.

[2] For more on this topic, see the section of this manual titled *Leadership*.

Counsel for Ministers

We must guard against coming across as the least bit arrogant in our dealings with the workers of the church, taking care that we never give the impression that we know it all. While we have a responsibility to lead, we should keep in mind that we *serve* in the role of ministers. Real love is neither demanding nor possessive, for 1 Corinthians 13:4-5 tells us that "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; … charity vaunteth not itself, … seeketh not her own…"

Relationship with the Congregation

In both the Old and New Testaments, the word translated *pastor* offers a picture of the relationship that God intended to exist between those of us who serve the church in ministerial roles, and those in the congregation. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word translated *pastor* is *ra-ah,* and refers to one who "tends a flock."[1] The word translated *pastors* in Ephesians 4:11 comes from the Greek word *poimen*, and is a metaphor denoting a shepherd. This is an appropriate image, for Christ identified Himself as the "Good Shepherd,"[2] and gave us a perfect example of one who is entrusted with the care of the flock of God.

The Apostle Peter used a shepherd metaphor when he wrote to the elders of the Early Church, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 5:2-4).[3] Those Early Church elders who read Peter's words were well acquainted with the role of shepherds. They would have clearly grasped the picture of leaders of the church serving as under-shepherds who conscientiously and gently care for the people of God under the watchful eye of the Good Shepherd.

Various passages in Scripture give us insight into the responsibilities of those who lead the flock of God. The prophet Ezekiel addressed "the shepherds of Israel," and proclaimed, "Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them" (Ezekiel 34:2-4). Clearly, the assumption was that a faithful shepherd would provide nourishment for the sheep, strengthen those who were feeble, tend to the injuries of those who were hurt, bring back those who had been driven away, and seek those who were lost.

The Apostle Paul's final words to the elders of the church at Ephesus also refer to "feeding" [nourishing] as one of the responsibilities of those who lead the flock of God. He said, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).[4] Other references to shepherds throughout Scripture help us to understand that, in our role of spiritual shepherds, we must be prepared to defend the flock from attack,[5] to guide and give direction,[6] and know the individual sheep well.[7]

Jesus' description of Himself as the Good Shepherd offers a beautiful picture of the attitude we need to have toward those who make up our congregations. He exemplifies the love we should have by stating that "the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). As shepherds of the flock, we should be approachable, responsive, gentle, and genuinely filled with concern and compassion. Our relationship with the congregation should be based on truth and trust, rather than power. Our attitude should be that of humility and a desire to serve, for Jesus said, "He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve" (Luke 22:26).

The Body of Christ that makes up our congregations is a work in progress. In any given church we have spiritual infants, veterans, and those in between. At times, the responsibilities of caring for our congregations may be challenging. Paul faced many challenges as he worked with those in the Early Church, including being "in perils among false brethren" and having responsibility for "the care of all the churches" (2 Corinthians 11:26, 28). Yet he could say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). He wrote to the believers at Corinth, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God" (2 Corinthians 3:5). He had learned the secret of relying upon God, and we must do likewise.

When we fulfill the responsibilities outlined in God's Word toward the people in our congregations in a loving, conscientious, and faithful manner, we will be building the type of relationship God expects between His under-shepherds and the flock of God that we have been entrusted with. In Jeremiah 3:15, God gave a wonderful prophecy. "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." May we endeavor, by the help and grace of God, to be ministers of the Gospel according to the heart of God himself, and dedicate ourselves to building a relationship with the flock of God that is rooted in humility and love.

[1] This word occurs in such passages as Jeremiah 3:15; 10:21; and 23:1.

[2] See John 10:11, 14

[3] No doubt the visual picture of a shepherd and his sheep had been impressed upon Peter's mind when Christ commissioned Peter with the words "Feed my sheep" in His exchange with Peter by the shore of the Sea of Galilee (see John 21:15-17).

[4] The word *overseer* in this passage is from the Greek word *episkopos*, and has a similar meaning as *shepherd*. It literally means "one who watches over."

[5] See 1 Samuel 17:34-35.

[6] See Psalm 23:3.

[7] See John 10:14, 27.

Counsel for Ministers

There will be times in our ministry when conflict occurs between us and a congregation member. It is important to look beyond the occurrence itself, and respond in a godly manner, which may include the need to ask for or extend forgiveness. We cannot afford to yield to self-pity, or to harbor any feeling of resentment, ill will, or defensiveness. We must guard against responding to conflict in a petty or destructive manner. Instead, we should set an example of grace and mercy, remembering our challenge to "be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Peter 3:14).

One part of our responsibility as ministers—and an aspect that is especially important if we are pastors—is to be sure that we follow the Biblical admonition to be "given to hospitality" (1 Timothy 3:2). While the pastor should not be expected to assume the total responsibility of gracious reaching out in Christian love, it is an area where he or she should set an example whenever possible. While our homes must be our place of refuge and restoration, this does not preclude us from needing to extend ourselves in this manner from time to time as well. Balance is key, but we want to keep in mind that when we invite congregation members and visitors into our homes, our hospitality may well be opening a door of unity and fellowship that allows us to minister to them even more effectively in the days ahead.

As ministers, we must be careful not to deal with situations that should be handled by the pastor, unless he has assigned the matter to us. If a church member comes to us with a concern, we should direct that one to the pastor, as he is in the best position to know the circumstances and personalities involved in situations that arise.

When an assisting minister continually showers public and private support for the pastor, this not only assists in cultivating a healthy relationship between the pastor and the congregation, but also between the assisting minister and the congregation.

Relationship with Individuals with Specific Needs

Our goal as pastors and ministers is to labor "for the perfecting of the saints, . . . for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12). The individuals who regularly attend our churches around the world represent a wide spectrum of human needs, and we will be called upon to interact with many who have specific circumstances and/or issues that require careful attention. While it would be impossible to address every category in this manual, we will review guidelines for dealing with some of the major ones.

Backsliders

The term "backslider" encompasses individuals with a wide range of attitudes toward the church and the Gospel in general. For backsliders who continue to attend church services or show an interest in seeking the Lord, we want to do everything we can to encourage them. God's Word urges, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:7). The devil may tell those who have turned away from God there can be no forgiveness for them, or deceive them into supposing the church will never accept them back. We want to be sure our treatment of them clearly communicates the fallacy of such a perspective. We love those who have left the faith, and pray God will recover people "out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (2 Timothy 2:26). We want everyone to make Heaven, so we show kindness and a genuine concern for a backslider's spiritual restoration.

At the other end of the spectrum, we may at times deal with backsliders who are accusatory or contentious. When this is the case, we must not be afraid to convey clearly that we love this work, we support the ministry, and we uphold the doctrines as taught by the Apostolic Faith organization. However, unless the individual is one who "soweth discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:19), even a discussion such as this should be carried out with civility and concern for the person's never-dying soul.

Those with mental or emotional problems

Great care must be taken in dealing with those who attend our services while evidencing mental confusion, erratic behavior, or symptoms of personality disorders. At times, such problems have roots in physical causes, although some symptoms can also be caused by spiritual issues. Obviously, a condition caused by a physical impairment will require a much different approach than a condition rooted in sin or spiritual issues.

As pastors and ministers, we have a dual responsibility. First, we realize that troubled individuals often turn to the ministry for help for a variety of reasons. These may include a lack of knowledge or access to mental health care resources, financial concerns, or simply a sense that churches want to help people. We need to respond appropriately, looking to God to give us the insight we need to handle each situation. We are not mental health professionals, and we must be aware of our limitations in offering that type of help, but we can do our best to promote a reassuring and accepting environment, overcome fears, and offer the help and comfort of the Lord.

As we reach out to the individual, we must also be mindful that we have a responsibility to our congregations. We are charged with maintaining the spirit of worship in the sanctuary of God, so disturbances to the service must be handled carefully and with compassion. If there are indicators that erratic behavior could become violent or dangerous in any way, we must take necessary steps to protect our congregation. Ushers should be alert for disruptions, and be trained in the appropriate response should such an event occur.

Those with physical impairments

As we labor in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we want to follow His example of caring for those with physical limitations. We must do everything we can to make access to worship, ministry, and fellowship a reality for the disabled or those with special needs.

Just as important as physical accommodation is an attitude that genuinely welcomes, appreciates, and includes the physically challenged. Paul reminded the Corinthians that "Those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: and those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked" (1 Corinthians 12:22-24). Disregard or exclusion of those with physical impairments should have no part in the Body of Christ.

We must be careful when preaching on the Biblical accounts of the disabled that we in no way disrespect members of our audience. We may have those in our congregation who cannot speak, or are hearing or sight impaired. The Bible frequently mentions the lame, the blind, the deaf, and the dumb, but we must be cautious in making spiritual parallels. For example, we should not imply that physical blindness equates to spiritual darkness. We should also avoid suggesting that any disability is a tragedy, as many who deal with physical challenges in our day cope very successfully. This is not a matter of being politically correct; it is a matter of showing respect and preserving the dignity of those with disabilities.

Those who are impoverished

There will always be impoverished people who will look to us for help. Many of these are truly in desperate need. In Matthew 25:34-45, Jesus reminded His followers that a neglect of the needs of the poor is ultimately a neglect of Himself. The Apostle Paul told the church elders in Ephesus, "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). The Apostle John wrote, "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? (1 John 3:17). Clearly, one evidence of the love of God dwelling in us is a love for the poor.

We believe that the primary purpose of our church is to point people towards committing their lives to Christ and then maturing in this Latter Rain Gospel. Still, though relief organizations and governmental agencies have a major role in responding to material needs, we also have a duty in this area. Providing assistance to those in want must be done with wisdom and stewardship. At times, a fund is maintained by the congregation for this purpose. As ministers and pastors, we have a responsibility to effectively manage the resources of the church. While we have genuine compassion for the poor, we should not respond to needs emotionally, but rather, prayerfully and with the guidance of the Lord.

There are times when we may feel led to discreetly mention a particular financial need to the workers of the church, such as when a disaster takes place that impacts many. We do not take a collection in the church for such needs, but members of the congregation may place offerings designated for relief into the tithe box.

Those who promote false teachings

The presence of false teachers has been a problem for the Church in every age since the time of Christ. Jesus warned His followers, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15). The Apostle Peter cautioned, "There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, . . ." (2 Peter 2:1). As ministers and pastors, we have a God-given duty to defend the faith and protect the flock of God from those who promote false teachings. We are to do this both by faithfully expounding the truth (see Titus1:9), and by putting false teachers to silence by refusing to grant them an opportunity to voice false doctrine in the church (see Titus 1:10-11).

Some may question just how much false doctrine makes a person a false teacher. The answer is found in 1 Timothy 1:3, where Paul exhorted the younger minister, "Charge some that they teach no other doctrine." As those charged with preserving the truth, we must not permit the simple truths of the Word of God to be compromised.

Those who disagree with church policy

At times, it may come to our attention that an individual is participating in the work of the church who is not qualified to do so. If the problem is a failure to align to church policy, it may be advisable to wait and pray for a time, allowing the Lord to deal with the heart of the person involved. Some have reversed previous personal decisions and have decided to comply with church policy. The exception would be if tarrying for a time creates new challenges that could be avoided by addressing the matter immediately.

We do not advocate looking around with the intent of "finding out" those who are failing in some area, but we also cannot have someone continue to participate in the work who refuses to abide by church policy. If we are unsure as to where the organization stands on a particular issue or of what step to take next, then we should contact our district superintendent or the Superintendent General with our question.

We do not need to fear addressing church guidelines with those who persist in non-compliance. They will respect us for kindly conveying to them our boundaries. We owe it to the individuals involved to address the issue; we owe it to our congregations; and we owe it to our fellow ministers and pastors, because *not* addressing it undermines all of the above.

When we discuss a church policy matter with an individual, that person should leave the discussion with an understanding of four facts:

- If the person continues to follow a personal policy that conflicts with church policy, it will not work for him or her to participate in our church work.
- We will support the individual's right to make a contrary decision, even if we do not support the decision itself.
- We will not make an individual's decision for them; it is a personal choice. God gave us each a free will, and every person must respond based upon what God has put in his or her heart. If a certain behavior or policy is not in the heart, then adherence is merely a pretense.
- The individual is expected to withdraw from the work if his or her decision is to continue to align to personal policy in conflict with organizational guidelines, rather than the ministry asking that one to discontinue participation.

As pastors and ministers, if we observe a seeming failure in an individual at another location, we must have mercy and understanding regarding a matter we might think is not being addressed. What we may not know is that it *is* being addressed, but cautiously, and with a little time.

Those who oppose or rebel

As we labor in the ministry, we will be opposed at times. It is important to distinguish between an individual who is rebelling, and one who simply has a differing viewpoint. Everyone will not be delighted with us, even though we do our best to be kind and gentle. We must not let that sway us. In fact, we can view every opposing view as an opportunity to learn.

At times we may have to deal with individuals who want to call themselves "Apostolic" but do not wish to subject themselves to the leadership of this work. Sometimes such people will attempt to persuade us by saying, "The Lord showed me," or "The Spirit told me." God is faithful to speak to hearts, but He will not reveal something that conflicts with His Word.

One point that the Bible clearly teaches is that we are to submit ourselves to those God has placed in positions of authority in the church (see Hebrews 13:17). Subordination is a Bible doctrine. Those who submit themselves to the order God has established live a rich life within that church order, while those who resist or rebel live in varying degrees of frustration. The deeper issue is subjection to God, and individuals face this issue in any church where they choose to attend.

We must not allow ourselves to overreact to individuals who oppose us or rebel against the authority of the church. It is important that we not speak unkindly of them. Our attitude should be one of gentleness and reason, even toward those who make a decision that is different than what we stand for as a church. We must take care not to burn bridges and destroy relationships, because sometimes individuals reconsider their former positions.

Our responsibility is to make sure there is no confusion in the church. We do not elevate peripheral issues by addressing them from the pulpit, nor dignify negative perspectives by giving them more time and energy than needed. Our focus must continue to be on lifting up the Name of Jesus, no matter what forces oppose us.

Those who depart

We want everyone to love and value this Gospel and the Apostolic Faith organization as we do. However, at times some will choose to leave the church. It saddens us, but we gain nothing by compromising in an attempt to dissuade them. We must determine to remain steadfast in the faith, "rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught" (Colossians 2:7).

We should be kind to those who depart; we do not chastise or rebuke them unless that is our clear ministerial duty because of their actions. Our desire is to keep the door open for those who perhaps only temporarily have chosen another way. As we faithfully stand for the pure, sound doctrine and practices upheld by this organization, we maintain a place for those who have departed to come back to. In addition, we set a godly example for those who are watching.

Paul the Apostle had his share of disappointments in this regard. He said, in 2 Timothy 4:16, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me." However, in the next verse, he stated, "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me." So we are never alone, even when we feel lonely. We have the assurance that God stands with us, and we have the saints of God around the world who stand with us, too, in love and appreciation for this Latter Rain Gospel.

Those with moral issues

An individual whose life does not align with the moral standards upheld in the Word of God cannot participate in the work of the Apostolic Faith organization. For example, if a person is living in adultery, even though the marriage is legal, he or she is ineligible to take an active role in the church, although they are welcome to attend the services.[1]

If moral failure occurs in the life of one who is participating in the work, it must be immediately addressed, usually privately, and always with the idea of salvaging the soul. Our desire is not to shame the individual, but to do our best to encourage them to make the matter right.

Restoration to God is certainly possible through genuine repentance (see Isaiah 55:7). When it occurs, sin is forgiven. However, restoration to God does not undo the fact that there are consequences for moral error. Our approach in addressing issues of immorality should not be viewed as punitive. It would more accurately be described as protective: protective of the individual who failed, and protective of the integrity of the work and the fact that we stand for holy living.

Sex Offenders

In our congregations, we likely have those who are or have been victims of sexual harassment, molestation, and rape. As guardians of the flock of God, we have a responsibility to be alert for predators, protective of our congregations, and supportive of victims. [2]

The term "registered sex offender" covers a wide range of perpetrators. It includes older teens convicted of being consensually intimate with a minor. It also includes pedophiles who have molested dozens of chil-

dren over a period of decades. Each is a serious offense, but they may be approached by us differently. The type of crime will have an impact on how we address it. Therefore, it is appropriate for us to request details related to the crime committed. That can include asking questions of the perpetrator and then confirming his answers with a parole officer and/or gaining information through an internet database.

As a church organization we comply with restraining orders issued by the authorities. We can also exercise our prerogative to bar an individual from the church premises. We should be aware that perpetrators can purposefully conduct themselves in a compliant and apparently submissive manner, which in and of itself does not mean that they should be allowed to attend church. Each case must be addressed independently.

If a victim of the offender attends our church and objects to the perpetrator attending, then the perpetrator should be banned. If the perpetrator is allowed to attend, it is appropriate to ask him to comply with a written conditional attendance agreement. As an example, that agreement could stipulate that the offender arrive for church immediately before the service begins, sit in a pre-designated spot, remain seated until the service ends, and leave immediately following. Any violation of the agreement would cause an immediate revocation of the privilege to attend.

We will not please everyone. To those who view our approach too stringent, we remind them that we are not responsible for the actions that necessitated the protective measures. To those who view our approach too lenient, we remind them that souls are at stake. We pray for wisdom, asking God to help us make the right decision in these matters. We cannot be afraid to impose restrictions, particularly where the welfare of our congregations is jeopardized. At the same time, we do not want to be guilty of imposing undue restraint where circumstances do not warrant it.

When these types of situations arise, we should feel free to solicit input from our district superintendent or the Superintendent General in determining our approach. Proverbs 11:14 states, "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety."

In conclusion, as we interact with individuals in the above categories, or with those who have other specific issues and needs, we must always be guided by the example of Jesus. We read in Matthew 9:36, "When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them." The phrase "moved with compassion" could be translated "gripped with compassion." We want to be gripped with compassion toward all, but particularly toward those who have been victimized. Jesus knew the hearts of those He ministered to—He saw their needs, understood their problems, was aware of their sins—and yet He was moved with compassion. That is the spirit and attitude we want to have as well.

[1] For more on this subject, see the section of this manual titled *The Sanctity of Marriage.*

[2] See the *Apostolic Faith Church Safety and Security Manual* for a more extensive explanation of how matter of this nature must be handled.

Administrative Work of a Pastor

Personal Financial Stewardship

As ministers and pastors, our material resources—along with every other aspect of our lives—are owned by God and under His control; we are simply His stewards. Thus, our participation in the ministry includes the necessity of careful handling of our personal finances. While the pastors among us have the responsibility of conscientiously overseeing the fiscal affairs of the church,[1] all of us have a responsibility to set a right example in terms of proper stewardship of our personal resources. In 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, Paul said, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." We have been given a charge and it is up to us to receive with thanksgiving what we have been blessed with and manage it to the glory of God.

As ministers, we should live conservatively and not extravagantly. Our financial affairs should exemplify Biblical attitudes toward our material resources, revealing that our loyalty is undivided and we put God first (see Matthew 6:24,33), that we are content with what God has provided (see Hebrews 13:5), and that we are not focused on material gain but on eternal treasures (see Matthew 6:19-20 and 2 Corinthians 4:18).

The Bible offers many directives regarding proper handling of our finances. We want to be well-acquainted with Scriptural guidelines regarding money so we can properly guide our congregations. In addition, we should also be aware of the policies noted under the headings below that are specific to those of us who labor in the ministry of the Apostolic Faith organization.

Earning money

Those who are occupied full-time in the ministry may be supported by the church. In Numbers 18:21 we read, "And, behold, I have given the children of Levi [those who performed the religious functions of Israel's worship ceremonies] all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation." In the New Testament, Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:14).

In the Apostolic Faith organization, pastoral compensation is based on the financial status of the church, the average amount of tithing by the congregation, and the actual needs of the pastor and his family.[2] If we are called to serve at a location where the congregational tithing is not enough to support us and our dependents, we must be willing to work at a non-ministry job, as the Apostle Paul did on many occasions.[3] We should in no way feel demeaned by the need to work at a job outside the ministry. We are assured that God will make a way to provide for our needs, for we have the promise, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

Managing money

Financial integrity is a requirement for those of us in the ministry; any carelessness or irregularity in this matter should be scrupulously avoided. All the preaching we do can be negated by a hint of financial impropriety.

Careful planning is a key part of effective money management. The writer of Proverbs wrote, "Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches" (Proverbs 24:3-4). It is important to think long term. For example, we must look ahead and plan for our eventual retirement, just as secularly employed individuals

do—we should not anticipate that the church will be able to provide for our retirement. We may wish to begin contributing to a retirement plan,[4] or building equity in a home where we could eventually live if the Lord tarries.

Disciplined budgeting is another aspect of managing our money well. Jesus asked the question, "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" (Luke 14:28). In addition to planned expenditures—the building of a tower—budgeting helps us prepare for emergency or unplanned expenses. It is advisable for all of us to learn to cope with economic restrictions, for monetary challenges may arise at some point in our lives, even if we are not currently dealing with them. It is wise to always make purchasing decisions carefully and conservatively.

Good record keeping is also key to proper management of our finances. We need to know where our money came from, where it has gone, and where it is going. Proverbs 27:23-24 instructs, "Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds. For riches are not for ever: and doth the crown endure to every generation?" The most flagrant financial violation in evangelical circles occurs when leaders fail to keep church finances and personal finances separate. We do not co-mingle funds or allow the church to pay our personal expenses. This is a matter of integrity.

If evaluation of our personal financial status reveals concerns in any of these areas, we may need to obtain advice from a Christian financial planner in how to adjust our spending or develop a budget.

Saving money

We read in Proverbs 21:20, "There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up." This verse implies that if we are wise, we will consider the future and maintain a supply to provide for eventual needs. Obviously, this is not a license for hoarding, nor for being greedy or selfish. Rather, it is a matter of wisdom and sound judgment. The biggest issue is the discipline of saving and investing. It is important to spend less than we earn over a long period of time. In this, as in all matters relating to our handling of God-given resources, we want to set a good Biblical example.

Borrowing money

As ministers of the Gospel, it is important that we live in freedom from financial bondage. Both the Old and New Testaments warn against the dangers of being in debt. The writer of Proverbs observed, "The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender" (Proverbs 22:7). Paul advised the Roman Christians to "Owe no man any thing . . ." (Romans 13:8), offering a powerful reminder of God's view of all forms of unsecured debt that are not being repaid in a timely manner.

It should be noted that the Bible does not explicitly forbid all debt. For example, we would not view money owed on a home mortgage as being wrong. Sometimes a decision to obtain a home loan is actually a wise monetary decision. In the case of real estate purchases, the value of the property is security for the lender. The key is in making sure that our resources are being handled prudently and the repayment terms do not leave us with burdensome financial obligations.

When debt of any kind is incurred, regular repayment is a must. If unavoidable circumstances saddle us with obligations we cannot meet, we should take immediate steps to do our best to turn the situation around. These steps would include:

- List what we owe.
- Set a realistic goal for repayment.
- Sell all unnecessary items.
- Determine to live within our means—to spend less than we make.

- Develop a detailed, monthly repayment plan.
- Communicate with any debtors regarding our plan for timely repayment.
- Add no new debt.
- Stick to our plan until the obligation has been met.

The question may arise as to whether it is permissible for a Christian to file for bankruptcy. A Biblical principle is that we have a responsibility to pay what we owe. Psalm 37:21 states that "The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous showeth mercy, and giveth."

Many cultures use bankruptcy as a remedy for reckless financial stewardship. Christians have a duty to keep their word, paying what has been agreed upon. Faithful management of financial resources is an attribute of holy living. God will not hold one blameless who sets aside regard for the law of the Lord and takes secular legal steps to be absolved of financial obligations at the expense of others.

At times circumstances may arise, despite best intentions, where an individual cannot meet financial obligations. This is especially problematic for a minister. An attorney should be consulted to address the financial aspect of these circumstances, because certain types of bankruptcy exist which are designed to facilitate repayment of debts over time rather than avoiding them. The courts protect the indebted one while obligations are repaid. These types of bankruptcy provide an economically distressed individual with an alternative to taking measures that would violate the conscience of one who strives to live honorably and keep repayment promises. The pastor or district leader should be consulted to address the ministerial aspect of these circumstances, so the impact on our ministry can be addressed.

Giving money

The cornerstone of God's plan for financing His work is tithing—returning ten percent of our increase to God, who is the Owner.[5] Based on Nehemiah 10:38, which references the Levites bringing a "tithe of the tithes," we encourage pastors and ministers who are supported by the church to pay tithes on any personal salary provided by the church, as well as any other income earned by the pastor or spouse.

We also want to set the example of making offerings to further the work of the Lord. Doing so is not only commanded by God (see 1 Corinthians 16:2), but it is also one way of acknowledging that all of our blessings in life come from the Giver of "every good gift and every perfect gift" (James 1:17). In 1 Chronicles 29:3, we read how King David set an example of giving, saying, "Because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, . . . given to the house of my God . . ." The princes of the tribes and the people followed his example and "offered willingly to the Lord" (1 Chronicles 29:3,9). We read in Acts 2:44-47 that those of the New Testament church who gave of their substance to God enjoyed gladness, singleness of heart, and favor with all the people. We want to be alert to the places and ways God would have us help out, for He commends giving that is regular, in keeping with our income, and generous.

Paying money

Since our civil governments exist by divine ordination, it is incumbent upon us who are in leadership roles in the church to set an example in paying our taxes and meeting any financial obligations established by our government. Jesus taught His followers, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's" (Matthew 22:21). Paul instructed those in the church at Rome, "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour" (Romans 13:7). While we are free to take every tax deduction that is legal and honest, we must not attempt to avoid our duty in this matter. Refusal to obey civil authorities is allowable only when their demand conflicts directly with obedience to God.

In conclusion, financial matters can have a great impact on our witness for Christ, both to those in our con-

gregations and to the community at large. Since we live in a culture that is increasingly skeptical of Christians, we want to be sure our handling of money matters is above reproach so our testimony is not damaged in any way. Again quoting from Proverbs, "Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right" (Proverbs 16:8). Integrity of heart and enjoying the favor of God is of far greater value than anything the world can offer us.

[1] Read the section of this manual titled *Oversight of Church Finances* for more on this topic.

[2] In the United States, the Internal Revenue Service determines what qualifies as compensation (both taxable and non-taxable). Compensation includes: gross pastoral compensation, parsonage allowance, health insurance allowance/allotment, personal use of church-owned vehicle(s), and unaccountable reimbursement from the church.

[3] See Acts 18:3; 20:33-35; 1 Thessalonians 2:9; and 2 Thessalonians 3:8.

[4] The IRS allows a variety of plans designed to assist in preparing for retirement. If you are employed full or part-time outside of the church, it is advisable to take advantage of any retirement benefits offered through your employer, especially those which match contributions.

[5] Read the section of this manual titled *Tithes and Offerings* for more on this topic.

Counsel for Ministers

For pastors in the United States, if a salary is offered, it will be based on the size of the church and its ability to provide. If pastors live in a church-owned parsonage, the value of the parsonage and any church payment of utilities is considered compensation. This compensation is generally not taxable for income tax purposes, but it is included in earnings for Social Security taxes. We advise *not* opting out of Social Security.

For the above items and many other tax issues, we recommend that pastors use a local accountant to make sure they are in compliance.

Appointing Church Workers

Workers of the church are a vital part of the Apostolic Faith organization. In many ways, they are the backbone of the efforts we make to spread the Gospel. As pastors, we have the responsibility of identifying areas in our local church where workers are needed, and then appointing individuals from those in our congregation to fill those positions.

The Word of God gives guidelines regarding the qualifications for those who labor in the work of the Lord. First and foremost, all who participate must be born-again Christians, for the basis of all true Christian service is relationship with God. Jesus himself taught, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7), and Paul told Timothy, "Be thou an example of the believers. . ." (1 Timothy 4:12). Those who serve in the church must first be partakers of the grace of God, and rightly and experientially understand the Gospel before they present it to others.

In 1 Timothy 3:8-13, Paul instructed Timothy regarding the requirements for a deacon—a word derived from the Greek *diakoneo*, which means "one who serves." In the early church, these individuals were chosen to assist church leaders with particular situations in the congregation, in order that the leaders might give themselves to prayer and ministering the Word (see Acts 6:4). Paul asserted that these workers should be grave (serious-minded), honest, abstinent from strong drink, not greedy, and possessors of a blameless witness before others. They were to be grounded in the faith, having an established and proven testimony. Their marriages and family life were to be in accord with Biblical standards.

We know that the furtherance of the Gospel requires commitment, dedication, and self-sacrifice. So we look for workers who not only have the necessary skills, but also are faithful, supportive of the ministry and the entire work, and people of faith and prayer. They should be open to the Spirit of God, have willing hearts, and subject themselves to the authority of the church.

As pastors, we need to challenge our congregations with the fact that all believers have a call and a responsibility to offer themselves in service to God. Christianity is a working religion. No one who bears the name of Christ can afford to be inactive in the Lord's work. Paul wrote to the Ephesians that our salvation is "not of works, lest any man should boast," but he added that believers are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:9-10). While works do not produce salvation, salvation produces good works.

It often may seem there are more positions to be filled than spiritually qualified individuals—especially if we are pastoring a smaller congregation. Jesus expressed this need for laborers when He pictured the world as a great spiritual harvest field. He told His disciples, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:37-38). If the need for workers was great when our Lord walked this earth, we can be sure it is no less today, as we draw near to His return. We must simply follow Christ's admonition, and pray to the Lord of the harvest to send us workers. God is faithful, and just as He provides for the material needs of the work, He will in His own time provide the right people to fill needed positions as we bring the matter before Him in prayer.

As pastors, we are called to serve not only as leaders, managers, and teachers, but also as facilitators. It is our responsibility to make sure workers in the church are trained and equipped for the task they have been asked to do. This means, for example, scheduling time for musical rehearsals and Sunday school roundtables, arranging for proper instruction and training of ushers and Gospel team members, making sure the janitorial crew has the equipment and supplies they need, and many more administrative tasks of this nature. It is perfectly appropriate to delegate responsibility to other ministers, elders of the church, or department leaders, but it is ultimately our duty to make sure that those who are involved in church work have what they need to function in their appointed roles.

As we do our best to properly assign, motivate, instruct, and supervise the efforts of the workers in our

church, we will be dealing with individuals who have a wide range of personalities and abilities. God's plan is for all of us to work together in harmony as "labourers together with God" (1 Corinthians 3:9). Just as each member of the physical body has an individual place, responsibility, opportunity, and duty, so it is in the work of the Lord. As we lead by example, offer appreciation and encouragement, and intentionally and prayerfully do our best to inspire and motivate those who work with us in God's service, we can be assured that the Lord will bless our efforts.

Counsel for Ministers

From time to time, it is good to bring the ministers and workers together to discuss matters pertaining to the work, apart from the remainder of the congregation. For more on this subject, see the section of this manual titled *Workers Meetings.*

We want to do all we can to encourage church workers to devote time to prayer—not only in personal devotions, but also before and after church services. While we must be understanding of the fact that family responsibilities can make this a challenge, parents of young children sometimes take turns caring for the children, allowing one parent to go to the prayer room before the service or have time at the altar afterward.

Special numbers in Sunday school, youth events, or children's church services may at times include young people who are not involved in the regular work of the church. It is important for pastors and youth activity leaders to keep a clear distinction between participation in these special events, and participation in the on-going youth work. While some allowance may be made regarding dress, behavior, or spiritual qualifications for children who only take part in a specific event, the spiritual qualifications and expectations for workers must be fully understood by those who are asked to take a role in regular services or ministries.

Supervision of Outreach Efforts

Paul told Timothy, "Do the work of an evangelist" (2 Timothy 4:5), so since the time of the Early Church, evangelism has been part of our pastoral job description. As those who serve in this role, and as individuals committed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we have a responsibility to reach out into today's world with the life-changing message given us.

The Apostolic Faith organization has undertaken many different approaches to outreach in its more than one-hundred year history.[1] For example, many of our churches have held Gospel services in jails and other correctional institutions and detention centers. In harbor cities, workers have visited the ships tied up at the docks and invited thousands of men into church services. Gospel teams of musicians, singers, and ministers have taken the Gospel into hospitals, convalescent homes, and retirement centers. Music has been a very successful outreach tool in Apostolic Faith circles: most of our churches have orchestras or smaller instrumental groups, as well as choirs, vocal ensembles and soloists who provide music in each of the services. People love music, and music programs attract visitors. Outreach efforts among young people have also been a primary way of touching the neighborhoods around our Apostolic Faith churches. Sunday schools, Vacation Bible School, and youth camps have been instrumental in bringing many souls into the Kingdom.

Methods of evangelical outreach change from decade to decade and from region to region, but our commitment to reach the lost remains the same. Part of our pastoral role is supervising the outreach efforts of the local congregation where we serve. Our responsibility in this matter encompasses several aspects.

Allocating resources. As pastors, we do our best to properly apportion our financial resources and available workers between sustaining the local church and advancing outreach endeavors. We do not ignore the fact that there are many needs to be met within the Body of Christ. At the same time, we must balance those needs with the desire to fulfill the Great Commission in reaching out beyond ourselves.

Teaching the congregation. We want to be sure that our congregations are aware that reaching out to the unsaved is a mandate for every Christian. By far, the best "tool" in terms of evangelistic outreach is the personal witness of individuals. For that reason, we should preach from time to time on the subject of soul winning, challenging our flock with the biblical mandate to share their faith. We will also want to keep our congregations informed about the various missionary and outreach efforts undertaken by our organization as a whole.

Enlisting workers. As pastors, we have the responsibility of selecting and equipping individuals in our congregation to participate in the outreach efforts of our church.[2] We must encourage our flocks to go out into the community and share their faith with everyone in their personal circles of influence. We should make it a point to lead by example and challenge others to do the same.

Assessing efforts. From time to time we will need to assess the existing outreach efforts of our church to determine if they are still effective and a wise investment of resources. We will also need to assess if the program needs modification or expansion to function more successfully.

Holding meetings. As we consider options for outreach in our church, we should keep in mind that our primary outreach endeavor is holding Gospel meetings. In most Apostolic Faith services, those who attend will hear that God offers salvation and deliverance from sin, and empowers individuals to live victorious lives. Our services are not designed to be entertainment, but to deliver the message of this Latter Rain Gospel, and over the years, God has certainly blessed this approach.

Impacting our communities. In addition to regular church services, we should be alert to possibilities for extending the Gospel into our own communities. A veteran missionary in the Apostolic Faith work once said that vision is the ability to see the opportunities within our current circumstances. While we can learn by discussing with other Apostolic Faith pastors what has worked for them, or even by reviewing methods used

by churches outside our organization, we should be aware that God has a perfect and individual plan for our church. God has not called us to be like other churches. We must search out what God would have *us* to do.

Acquiring local insight. Matthew 11:1 tells us that Jesus departed "to preach in their cities." He went to local neighborhoods, recognizing that there was a harvest to be gathered where He was. Insight about our locality may be gained by analyzing the community in which our church is located. Who lives in the area? In the United States, statistics regarding median income, number of children, racial mix, crime rate, social needs, etc. of a target area can be obtained at www.census.gov, and this information could suggest possible outreaches. Most importantly, we must pray! The availability of workers and the skills of our congregation will also factor into outreach decisions. Our evangelistic opportunities will not be the same as another church's, but every location has some attribute they can highlight.

Supporting and encouraging. Finally, it is also our responsibility to support and encourage those in our congregations who are engaged in the evangelistic efforts of our church. Our people should be assured that they are a vital part of our outreach. We labor together in a great missionary field that is "white unto harvest," and we are all missionaries in our corner of the great harvest field.

When the twelve spies went out to explore the land of Canaan, ten of them focused on the high-walled cities and the giants that inhabited the land. Only two voiced the assurance, "We are well able to overcome it" (Numbers 13:30). Let us purpose to be like the two, who saw the challenges but focused instead on the God they served. We do face challenges, but we can take the land! As we follow the admonition in 1 Corinthians 15:58, "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," we can be assured with the Apostle Paul that our "labour is not in vain in the Lord." God will bless our efforts!

[1] More specific information regarding these and other evangelistic outreaches undertaken over the years by the Apostolic Faith organization is available in our history book, titled *The Apostolic Faith—History, Doctrine, and Purpose.*

[2] For more on this topic, see the section of this manual titled *Appointing Church Workers.*

Counsel to Ministers

When those in the church have seen God bless a particular outreach method in the past, they naturally have a strong bond to it. Change is necessary at time, but we should be aware that it can be threatening. When we implement a change in strategies or direction, our goal must be to help the ministry and workers feel affirmed about the past, objective about the present, and inspired about the future.

We must keep in mind that results in spreading the Gospel are not always immediately apparent. Often a person's journey to salvation is a process of the Holy Spirit's striving with their souls. Paul pointed out, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:6). Our efforts may be part of the planting stage, and time must elapse before harvest. We must not be discouraged or assume our methods are not working just because we are not seeing immediate results.

As pastors, we must be sure that we do not overload willing individuals, to the detriment of their families.

Literature Distribution

Evangelism through the production and free distribution of quality Gospel literature has been a part of the Apostolic Faith organization since our beginning. The magazines and tracts produced by our organization have been a key component of many of our outreach methods, both in the United States and other parts of the world. Printed religious publications have led countless souls to the Savior, brought entire families into the church, and have been instrumental in establishing congregations around the world.[1] For that reason, the literature aspect of our evangelistic efforts merits our careful attention, thought, and prayer as pastors.

We have several responsibilities related to literature distribution.[2]

Order literature supplies. Supplies of *The Apostolic Faith* magazine, tracts, Sunday school curriculum materials, and other printed materials can be obtained through the district headquarters. As pastors, we will need to review our church's literature usage on a regular basis, in order to make sure that adequate supplies are available to our congregations. However, production and postage are increasingly expensive, so we should be careful not to request more than we can use.

Pastors of our churches in the United States are encouraged to establish a standing order with the headquarters distribution department for regularly-printed publications such as *The Apostolic Faith* magazine and curriculum materials. We should update headquarters regarding changes in literature needs through the Ministers Page on our corporate website, or by mail or phone. In areas outside of the United States, pastors should communicate their church's literature needs to their district headquarters.

Maintain a tract rack. Free Apostolic Faith magazines, tracts, booklets, and invitational flyers should be made available to visitors. Many of our churches have a tract rack located near the entry that has been especially designed to hold an assortment of our publications. The literature display should be kept neat and well-supplied, with current issues of the regular publications featured.

Announce and promote new publications. As pastors, it is our responsibility to announce and promote new publications as they become available from headquarters. We will want to familiarize ourselves with each publication so we can point out some highlight and effectively stimulate interest in our congregations. You may wish to promote a tract of the week occasionally, but do not make this so much a part of the routine that people fail to respond. Encourage the church ushers or greeters to offer guests and congregation members the tract of the week or other publications that you have mentioned in the service.

Encourage literature use. Part of our pastoral role is to encourage our congregations to use the literature in both their personal contacts and as a means of outreach in the community. Gospel teams who visit hospitals, care facilities, senior centers, prisons, or take part in other outreach ministries should be supplied with appropriate papers and tracts. When literature is used as a means of evangelizing in our local communities, each piece should include the local church's contact information.

We want to challenge our congregation members to view our tracts and other publications as a key part of their efforts in personal evangelism. When they are prepared with an appropriate piece of Gospel literature, God will give them many opportunities to share! A tract offers many advantages in reaching out to unbelievers: it can get into homes and stay there until it is read, it can be read many times over, it can target the recipients personal questions or background, it serves as a reminder of spiritual needs, and its message is always clear and compelling.

In order to make tract usage most successful, we should teach our people to do the following:

- *Pray.* We cannot win anyone to Christ, and neither can a tract. Only the Holy Spirit can do that, so we must have His anointing upon all our efforts.
- *Approach in an appropriate way*. People are more likely to accept Gospel literature if we first make

eye contact, smile, and initiate a conversation. Genuine friendliness opens many doors!

- *Use the right tracts.* While a wide range of topics are available, tracts giving a personal testimony or those explaining the way of salvation are best for evangelism. We should use the tracts on deeper experiences and other doctrinal subjects only when we know the spiritual needs of the recipients.
- *Make every opportunity count.* It is a good idea to keep a selection of tracts or other publications with us, and never overlook a God-given opportunity to share the good news of Christ.
- *Support the publication ministry.* Chaplains and distributors from around the world frequently request large quantities of these materials, and production and shipping costs are not a small expenditure. New areas of literature outreach are researched and moved into, as the Lord leads. While those of us who live some distance from Portland cannot participate personally in the production process, we should do our best to support our organization's literature ministry financially, and most importantly, with our prayers.

[1] More information regarding the literature distribution work of the Apostolic Faith organization is available in our history book, titled *The Apostolic Faith—History, Doctrine, and Purpose.*

[2] Though we may delegate some of these tasks to responsible workers in our church, we are ultimately responsible to make sure they are dealt with in an appropriate manner.

Counsel for Ministers

In addition to making full use of printed Gospel literature, we should familiarize ourselves with the church website at www.apostolicfaith.org, and remind our congregations from time to time that our literature can be accessed online.

Make certain that those in your congregation who distribute literature understand that they must not leave literature in people's mailboxes. In the United States, it is a federal offense to place materials in a mailbox without affixed postage, and doing so could result in the church being fined.

Promotion of Church Events

In order to maximize our church's outreach efforts, we must make sure that people know of our existence. For this reason, promoting our church and its events is a part of our pastoral responsibilities.

The Bible says believers are to be light (witnesses to the joy of fellowship with God), salt (symbolic of purity, preservation, and flavor), and Christ's messengers (those charged with spreading the news of salvation).[1] We are to go into all the world and "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). God could have used any marketing tool He wanted to communicate His message, but He chose to commission His followers to carry out that task.

When we publicize our church or church events, we are not promoting ourselves. We are holding out Jesus to a world in need of a Savior! The goal of every promotional effort is to build relationships, with the intent of winning souls to God. People do not connect with a mission statement, a logo, or a church building as much as they connect with other people. Promotional strategies are simply tools to introduce people to individuals who are functioning as light, salt, and Christ's messengers.

As we consider ways to make our church known in the local area, we may also want to think about something that makes our congregation stand out, and use it as a feature. Rather than being identified simply as "the church on Second and Main Street," we want to be the church on Second and Main Street that has the "wonderful music" or the "friendly people," or the "great Sunday school." The Lord asked Moses, "What is that in thine hand?" (Exodus 4:2), and the same question could be asked of us. While our emphasis on sound doctrine and holy living sets us apart from the other churches in our communities, people will not be aware of that until they connect with us. What special feature does our church have that we can feature in order to stimulate interest in our community?

Personal contact is always the most effective way to introduce people to our church, and this is a promotional effort that every church can do, no matter what limitations we face in terms of financing and personnel when it comes to other methods. As pastors, we need to equip our members to invite others to our services. If we give them the tools they need to be effective, and lead by example in promoting our church and its activities, they will be encouraged to do the same. Those one-to-one interactions are invaluable.

Although word-of-mouth and some other forms of publicity are inexpensive or free, at times we will want to consider options that have a price tag. Making promotional decisions and assessing the results of our outreach methods is part of our pastoral responsibility. Our choices will depend upon a variety of factors, including the size of our community, the event we are publicizing, the cost of the various options, availability of workers and other needed resources, and our careful analysis of past efforts.

Before we begin any type of publicizing, we must identify our audience. Jesus always tailored his message to those with whom He was speaking. When He was around fishermen He talked about fish, and when He was around farmers He talked about farming. As we consider how to promote an event, we should ask ourselves, "Is this event designed primarily for our own church families, for individuals in the community, or for an entirely new field?" Identifying our target audience will help us focus our resources.

As we consider how best to publicize our church outreaches, we must keep in mind the basic principles of effective advertising. A good promotional device will do four things:

- It will capture attention.
- It will engage the audience by addressing their needs or desires.
- It will provide a solution to their needs or desires.
- It will encourage them to accept that solution.

Some methods to consider include the following:

Newspapers. Daily papers can a good way to reach large numbers of people, but the cost of advertising in the metropolitan dailies may be high. In large cities, neighborhood publications often go to homes in the immediate vicinity of the church, and these smaller papers often are more willing to print news write-ups regarding church events. Be sure to make the article interesting and provide a photograph if possible.

Some large daily papers provide places (neighborhood sections, arts section, religion section, etc.) for community announcements. We should familiarize ourselves with the options available in our area.

Radio and TV advertising. When we think of radio and television advertising, we generally think of paid spots. If our congregation has the financial resources available, broadcasting the Sunday morning service, or hosting a regular program of music and testimonies can be a successful way of acquainting those in our locality with our church. However, while these are valid options, they will be costly. There are also some free ways to advertise via this media. Many television or radio stations have a "community corner" where they publicize events in the community. Others will provide public service announcements for nonprofit efforts; usually these PSAs are free. Check with your local television, cable, or radio station to find out what is available in your area.

Electronic media. The Internet is a powerful tool that continues to change the way people obtain and use information. For that reason, we need to explore ways it can be utilized in spreading the Gospel and acquainting people with our church.

If we pastor in the United States, we should be sure our local church contact information on the corporate website at www.apostolicfaith.org is kept up-to-date, and that we contribute items to the news section of that site related to our local church events. If someone in our congregation has the skills to create a website for our local church, this could be a means of reaching those in our communities. If our church does not have resources for an independent website, we could consider opting for an account on one of the free social networking sites.

Church signage. We want to make sure that our church is clearly identified by good signage on the church property. If space permits, we should include our service schedule and contact information. Our church's sign is an expression of our identity to everyone who knows us as well as to all who pass by, so we want to make sure it is attractive and well-maintained.

If the church is located on a main thoroughfare, reader board signs can afford an opportunity to offer short Gospel messages in a concise and captivating manner.

Invitational flyers. Many of our churches have invitational flyers that provide information about location and service schedule, as well as highlighting special features about the church that would be a "draw" to those who receive the flyers. The flyers should be of good quality, with a design that reflects the conservative, godly organization we represent. Encourage visitors and members in your congregation to take them for distribution to their friends, business associates, and individuals with whom they come in contact.

Promotional flyers. Many desk-top publishing and word-processing software packages can produce highly attractive tri-fold (an 8.5 inch by 11-inch sheet folded in thirds) brochures. Brochures can contain a great deal of information if designed well, and are a common and relatively inexpensive method of advertising. Computer-generated posters publicizing an upcoming event can also be a great way to inform those in our areas about what is taking place at our church. We can encourage our whole congregation to take part in distributing the flyers or posting them at local schools, stores, or businesses that have a place for such announcements.[2]

Direct mail. Advertising with direct mail postcards is another advertising strategy to consider. Direct mail zooms in on a target audience—for example, people who have recently moved into the area around the church. Postcards can be designed and printed through online sources at reasonable rates, and addressed

to pre-selected individuals, or unaddressed and delivered on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis. The United States postal system offers lower rates for buyers of bulk mail permits.[3]

Directories or programs. Advertising in directories or programs varies in value, depending upon the number of people who read or refer to them. Advertising in the local Yellow Pages is typically quite costly; we may want to opt for free local community or neighborhood papers, or online directories.

Business cards. Business cards are not only for retail businesses anymore—they can be a good addition to the evangelism tools we offer our congregation members. The card's small size offers a convenient and cost-effective way of introducing our church. Magnetic business cards are durable and increase the probability that your contact information will be readily available.

Community events. Many of our churches schedule some form of community outreach event, such as a concert, fall festival, Vacation Bible School, church picnic, or something of that nature.[4] This provides a non-threatening venue where people in the neighborhood can come and learn more about our church.

How do we know if our promotional efforts are reaching people? The best way to evaluate effectiveness is to track the results of each method. This information can be gathered in a variety of ways. We may wish to include a "How did you hear about us?" line on a response card included in our welcome materials. When we host a community event, we could put a similar question on the registration form. Our church greeters could be trained to include that question in their conversations with visitors. Compiling the acquired information will help us know which methods were most effective and make relevant adjustments based on what we have learned.

In conclusion, we want to frequently remind our people that the best advertisement for the work of the Lord is the godly life lived by those who make our church their place of worship. Paul the Apostle challenged believers of all times by telling us that we are living epistles "known and read of all men" (2 Corinthians 3:2). A godly life, accompanied by a desire to reach out to others, is a winning combination! When our church becomes known as a place where people's lives are changed for the better, marriages are restored, and broken homes and lives are mended, people will take notice. Let us purpose to be a beacon of hope for the lost and hurting in our community!

[1] See Matthew 5:13-16 and 1 John 1:5.

[2] Federal law in the United States prohibits placing material of any kind in mail boxes, so we should be sure to advise our people about this restriction.

[3] In order to qualify for these rates, the mail must be formatted and sorted in specific ways that reduces the handling required by the postal service. Check online at www.usps.com or with your local post office for requirements.

[4] For more information on this topic, see the section of this manual titled *Supervision of Outreach Efforts.*

Counsel for Ministers

As pastors and ministers, we must not be discouraged if it appears that our advertising efforts are not instantly successful. We are responsible to assess and evaluate our methods of promoting our church and church events, and we want to be good stewards of our financial resources. However, we cannot assume that we have failed if we do not see a tremendous influx of visitors as a result of our advertising. Paul the Apostle

had his share of disappointments, and so will we. It takes time for a seed that has been planted to germinate and sprout, and one invitation or bit of information about our church may need to build upon another. We do our best to make wise decisions, and then leave the results in God's hands.

Our pattern is found in Acts 2:42, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." As we faithfully preach the apostles' doctrine, maintain a holy way of life, and do our best to effectively present this pure, Latter Rain Gospel, we know that truly hungry hearts will find this way appealing.

Oversight of Church Finances

Those of us who serve as pastors in the Apostolic Faith have a great privilege, but also a great responsibility. As stewards of God and representatives of this organization, we are charged with overseeing the fiscal affairs of our local church. Our financial system is built on trust. The congregations we serve have confidence that we are dealing with monetary issues in a meticulous and circumspect way, and operating in a manner consistent with the guidelines and expectations of the organization. We have a solemn obligation to do so.

As the primary financial officer of our local congregation, we will have oversight over several functions, including the following:

- Preparing or modifying the annual church budget.
- Handling of tithes and offerings.
- Making disbursements or payment for church bills and expenses.
- Performing or overseeing bookkeeping and record-keeping functions.
- Sending a monthly financial report to headquarters.
- Filing required federal and state tax forms, or delegating tax preparation to an accountant.
- Monitoring the cash flow of the church and disbursing funds for special projects.
- Acquiring vehicles or real property for the church.
- Providing headquarters with any requested financial information.

Whether our church is large, small, or any size in between, we should base financial management of our local church on the instructions summarized in the following areas.

Annual Church Budget

We should put together our annual church budget with long-term goals and a strategic plan in mind, and with appropriate consideration given to projected expenses over the next several years. The budget should be based on the prior three year's usable income, and be developed with the goal of building up and maintaining a cash reserve equal to at least twelve months of our church's average income. We will also want to start setting aside funds for known upcoming repairs, purchases, and expenditures on the church, parsonage, or church vehicles. Our actual budget performance should be monitored on a monthly basis.

Tithes and Offerings

The Word of God teaches that the work of the Lord is to be supported financially through tithes and freewill offerings.[1] As pastors, we have a responsibility to preach occasionally on these subjects, as they are a command of God to His people and we know that blessings accrue to those who obey Him.

In the Apostolic Faith organizations, we do not make solicitations of the public, nor are collections taken in any of the services.[2] God is well able to provide for the furtherance of the Gospel, and does not need our promotional abilities to improve the financial outlook of the church. Our manner of collecting offerings is to provide boxes in each of our churches where tithes and offerings may be placed. Gathering and depositing to the church account what is placed in those boxes is one of our duties as pastor. If we are temporarily away from our local church for any reason, we should assign that task to another minister or trusted church elder.[3]

The payment of tithes and offerings is strictly between the individual and God. If a person desires to give something toward the work of the Lord, God will bless that one for doing so, but such gifts are not presented or acknowledged at a public meeting. We must never publicly or privately reprimand a person for nonpayment of tithes nor for failure to make an offering.

Offerings that are designated for a particular use should be used for that purpose. Missionary offerings should be sent through headquarters for coordination purposes, rather than directly to the recipient.

Most Apostolic Faith branch churches in the United States send headquarters ten percent of the tithes money that they receive.[4] These funds help defray the cost of the publication work and other organizational efforts. Branch churches also make offerings from time to time, when doing so is feasible for them financially.

Disbursements

The tithes and offerings, along with any other funds that are received, should be deposited in a church account in a reputable bank. These accounts are to be set up in the name of the Apostolic Faith Church. Disbursements such as rent or loan payments on church property, church utility bills, furnishings or equipment for the church, and repairs to the facilities will be made from this account. If the church is financially able to support a pastor, disbursements may also include pastoral compensation, rental or purchase payments on the parsonage, church vehicle, and/or utility bills for the parsonage.[5]

We should make sure that all bills are paid in a timely manner, as not doing so would be a poor reflection on the church. Each congregation is expected to be self-supporting.

With accountability in mind, it is organizational policy for every check drawn on church accounts to require two signatures. In most cases, this will be our signature, as the pastor, and that of one other minister or trusted church elder. It is best if the second signer is not a relative, though in a small congregation, this may be unavoidable. The second signer should see the filled-out check before signing it; we should not ask anyone to sign blank checks. The Superintendent General or District Superintendent may also be authorized on the bank files as a third signer in case of emergency or the decease of one of the signers.

Bookkeeping and Record Keeping

As branch church pastors, we are accountable to our headquarters. Our congregations rely on the fact that headquarters is aware of the finances at each location. That is to our advantage as pastors, for if questions pertaining to fiscal management ever arise, our organization headquarters will be able to verify that matters have been handled according to established procedure. This system unifies us in that we are not only one in doctrine, but we are also one in mode of operation.[6]

We should train ourselves to make records with the thought in mind that a third party will examine them at some point. This means being clear and consistent in our notation method, and making sure that all entries are complete and accurate. We want to remember that if the Lord tarries, we will not be the only pastor of our current congregation. It should be our goal to leave the pastor who follows us with a sound, well-documented foundation.

Computer reporting is not mandatory, but if we choose to use that method, we will want to check with headquarters to see what software is recommended.

Financial Reports

Pastors in the United States are asked to submit financial reports to headquarters on a monthly basis.[7] The report should provide details of income (such as tithes, mission offerings, and other receipts) and expenses (disbursements for purchases, church building expenses such as utilities, pastor and parsonage expenses, and so forth). Assigned accounts should cover all recurring expenses and most non-recurring expenses. Miscellaneous/other expenses must be kept to a minimum, as this is the first place where accountants or auditors look for impropriety; anything recorded in that category must be properly explained and documented.

Reports should be submitted in a timely manner, within thirty days of the end of each month. The reports should provide enough detail to be useful in making decisions, but not so detailed as to be cumbersome. Basically, each monthly report should offer a "snapshot view" of our church's current financial situation. This

report assists the headquarters operation in understanding the needs of each local body. It is also required for insurance purposes and for the sake of accountability.

Provision for Special Needs

Where a construction or church project necessitates that a specific amount must be guaranteed ahead of time, occasionally pledges have been taken from those who voluntarily desire to give them. This is a means of knowing how much will be available to spend on the specific project, rather than an attempt to solicit funding. Some congregations have pledged amounts to be used for missionary activities, support of a full-time Gospel worker, or other specific needs that are ongoing in nature.

In conclusion, there are many benefits to maintaining a uniform method of handling finances. A standard approach makes the training of new pastors easier. It also facilitates communication between pastors about financial issues, and makes pastoral transition to a new location go smoothly.

The history of the Apostolic Faith work clearly demonstrates the fact that God's blessing has been upon the methods employed. The volume of work that is accomplished annually without mention of money or financial needs substantiates that God provides for His work and His people.

[1] For more information on the principle of tithing, see the section of this manual titled *Tithes and Offerings.*

[2] From the beginning of the Apostolic Faith work, Florence Crawford, our founder, took a firm stand on the issue of taking collections. She asserted (and this remains our position today), that we must depend upon God to provide for needs and direct in the financial matters of His work. In the first meetings, held in Portland in an old blacksmith shop, the person who had invited Sister Crawford wanted to have an open collection in order to obtain money for maintenance of the work. Sister Crawford firmly refused to have any part in the services unless the practice of taking collections was discontinued. The gentleman yielded to her conviction, and God vindicated her determination by supplying more through freewill offerings than ever had been received in collections prior to that time.

[3] In some cases, it is advisable to appoint a member of the congregation to take charge of the financial and property interests of the work. Naturally this person must be one who possesses the necessary bookkeeping skills, is of proven integrity, and one who has already demonstrated faithfulness to God over a period of time.

[4] Pastors in other countries should connect with their district superintendent to learn how they can help in their own regions.

[5] See the section of this manual titled *Personal Financial Stewardship* for more detailed information about compensation for pastors in the United States.

[6] This also serves as a safety net in the eventuality that either a pastor or a local church member exerts an inordinately strong will related to financial decisions, independent of others involved in the financial matters at hand.

[7] A sample of the current financial report form can be found on the Ministers Page of our website.

Counsel for Ministers

At times there will be more requests for funds in the local church than there are resources available. Leaders in various departments may suggest projects or expenditures they feel should be funded by the church, and in a desire to support the workers and give them what they need in their respective areas, we may be tempted to promise more than should be delivered. Be careful not to make hasty decisions regarding proposed expenses. Spend time observing, asking questions, and evaluating priorities before making any major commitment of funds. We want to avoid making financial decisions that would hold our successors hostage.

Acquisition and Care of Church Property

Oversight of the acquisition and care of church property is another responsibility that rests upon us as pastors. It is vital that we carefully and prayerfully consider every decision of this nature. As we look to the Lord, keeping in mind our primary purpose and core values, and operating in accordance with the principles established by the Apostolic Faith organization, we can be assured that God will give direction.

Several important aspects must be considered when contemplating the purchase of real property for the church.[1]

Funding of the purchase. We must not assume more debt than our church can reasonably repay, or incur such large payments that we severely limit funds for ongoing expenses or outreaches. All financial decisions should factor in the possibility of unanticipated expenditures or a decrease in tithing; we should maintain enough reserve to meet financial obligations if that should happen. It is never advisable to operate at the upper limit of projected income or available funds.

Gathering of input. Wise decisions are based upon factual and comprehensive information. Major purchases should never be impulsive, casual, or based upon emotional judgments. Rather, we should investigate any proposed acquisition of property thoroughly before we move forward. Information obtained must include:

- the sales price;
- the tax value;
- the location and legal description of the property;
- whether the property has the correct zoning for proposed use, and if not, what steps must be taken to obtain rezoning;
- any deed restrictions or legal considerations;
- a real estate appraisal or other verification of value;
- projected costs to develop or upgrade structures; and
- proposed financial arrangements.

Agreement between leaders and workers. We will need to ascertain if the key workers and elders of our congregation, after having time to evaluate the matter and pray, are in agreement that the proposed purchase is a wise decision. In most cases, we will want to especially consult with individuals in our congregation who have real estate and/or business finance experience.

Authorization of purchase. The acquisition or purchase by a congregation of any real property, whether vacant land or an existing building, must be authorized by headquarters. In the United States, it is our task as pastors to submit information regarding property to the Superintendent General. He in turn will present it to the Board of Trustees for review, and solicit their recommendations and authorization.[2] (In addition to purchasing decisions, the Board is legally required to authorize property sales, mortgages, refinances, leases, or other actions that would encumber the real property of branch churches.) In countries outside of the United States, pastors should submit purchase proposals to their district leader for approval.

Registration of property. In the United States, deeds for real property owned by the church are to be registered in the name of *The Apostolic Faith Mission of Portland, Oregon, an Oregon Corporation*, with headquarters at 5414 S. E. Duke Street, Portland, Oregon 97206, U.S.A. In areas outside of the United States, the deed or title to each piece of property is to be registered as stipulated in the constitution and bylaws for Apostolic Faith churches in that country.

At times, there will be a need for Apostolic Faith churches to procure vehicles or other major pieces of furnishings or equipment, either for the church building or the parsonage. As pastors, we are responsible for the oversight of those decisions. However, as in the purchase of real property, it is recommended that we first confer with key leaders and workers in our congregation to obtain their input and recommendations. It is especially advisable to discuss the matter with those who have knowledge regarding the item we are considering. Once a purchase has been made, we should inform headquarters regarding what has been procured. Pastors working in countries other than the United States should report purchases of this nature to their district leader.

Vehicles purchased in the United States should have the title registered in the name of *The Apostolic Faith Mission of Portland, Oregon, an Oregon Corporation*, with headquarters at 5414 S.E. Duke Street, Portland, Oregon 97206, U.S.A. Outside of the United States, vehicle titles should be registered as stipulated in the *Constitution and Bylaws* for Apostolic Faith churches in that country.

In addition to purchasing decisions, it is also our duty as pastors to see that the church grounds, furnishings, vehicles, and mechanical equipment are all given proper care and maintenance. When major repair or improvements are needed, it is good policy to seek input from headquarters or our district leader. No matter what our church's financial position, we want to do our best to make sure that our church properties are kept clean and in good repair, both inside and out. Our properties create an impression on visitors and those who live in the neighborhood, and we want that impression to be positive and a good reflection of the Gospel. We should be especially watchful regarding anything that might be hazardous, and provide equipment and supplies that will protect the health and safety of our congregation members and visitors.[3] Regular preventive maintenance will guard against unnecessary depreciation, and thus protect the church's investment.

[1] Real property is defined as property that includes land and buildings, and anything affixed to the land.

[2] Authorization by the Board is a legal requirement because we are a corporation.

[3] For more information on this topic, see the section of this manual on *Maintaining Church Safety.*

Evaluating and Training Ministerial Candidates

We should always be on the alert for prospective ministerial candidates, as there is an ongoing need for those who are qualified and willing to serve the Lord in this capacity. As we interact with the members of our congregation, we will observe those who have received the three foundational spiritual experiences of salvation, sanctification, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and are good followers, demonstrate a consistent prayer life, show leadership ability, are faithful in their attendance and service, clearly have the interest of the Lord's work at heart, and who in all things show "a pattern of good works" (Titus 2:7).[1] If we suspect that God may be calling such a one into the ministry, we should begin by taking the matter before the Lord in prayer.

As we continue to observe the individual and pray, in time we may feel led to discuss with our District Superintendent or the Superintendent General the possibility that the Lord may be calling that person into the ministry. This step is necessary because they may be aware of situations that would suggest a need to wait, or possibly even disqualify the candidate from service in the ministry. Upon approval, we are then free to initiate a conversation with the person regarding whether he or she feels that God is calling them to a new field of service as a minister of the Gospel. The timing of this discussion is discretionary.

If the prospective ministerial candidate is married, we should also consider the individual's spouse. Before moving forward, we will want to be sure of the spouse's spiritual qualifications and support for the ministerial call. We should also confirm that the candidate's home life is in accord with Biblical standards.

When we see the evidence of a divine call on an individual's life, we have a responsibility to do all we can to encourage that one and to provide opportunities for his or her talents. One part of Paul's challenge to Timothy was the instruction, "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). Training a new minister takes time, commitment, and energy, but it pays great dividends. Just as well-trained marathon runners have a better chance at finishing the race, well-trained ministers have a better potential for success in ministry.

Ministerial training, like any other type of training, is an activity involving instruction, implementation, observation, and evaluation.

Instruction: Perhaps the first step is to provide the ministerial candidate or new minister with a copy of the Apostolic Faith Minister's Manual. This book will review the basic doctrines upon which this work was founded, and will also give insight into the Biblical qualifications for one entering the ministry, the duties of a minister, general instructions regarding services, and many other necessary topics. When the minister has read through it, you should make yourself available to answer any questions, and discuss the topics covered. You will want to be sure that he or she thoroughly understands and supports the doctrinal position of the Apostolic Faith organization.

You will also want to make sure that the beginning minister signs up on our corporate website at www.apostolicfaith.org and registers as a minister. That grants access to the various ministerial training sessions that have taken place at the headquarters in Portland, Oregon over the past number of years. A number of other instruction tools that equip a minister for this God-given role will also be found there.

Encourage prospective and new ministers to make every effort to attend the camp meetings and special services held at the Portland headquarters, or their nearest district headquarters. These sessions provide invaluable opportunities to immerse ourselves in the study of God's Word, fellowship with and learn from other godly men and women, and observe firsthand what it means to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

A very critical part of instructing new ministers is to be good role models ourselves. They will learn much by

watching us, so we must be very careful regarding what we teach by example! We will be instructing them to:

- Be in their place on time.
- Love the congregation members.
- Show mercy and forgiveness.
- Move slowly when problems arise.
- Be aware that there are two sides to every story.
- Live debt free.
- Follow God's leading.
- Do all things decently and in order.
- Be positive, uplifting, and encouraging.
- Be a person of prayer.

Let us make sure that we lead by example in these and other aspects of effective ministry, so that we can say with Paul the Apostle, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Implementation: There are several steps we can take to prepare prospective ministers for preaching. They should be used in teaching Sunday school classes; this will be especially beneficial if they can teach in the adult age groups. They may be able to lead a Vacation Bible School event, give a devotional in a Youth Camp setting, or be a part of an outreach team. Ask them to share in other aspects of your worship services, such as leading in prayer or reading a Scripture passage. If your local congregation holds meetings in jails or care facilities, this can be a good place to ask them to offer a short message.

If the ministerial candidate is of an appropriate age to participate in youth events and services, these can be excellent training grounds. If the local congregation is small and no youth services are held, arrange for the new minister to bring the Word one of the weeknight services, which typically are attended for the most part by regular church members.

We should remind ourselves that training a new minister means trusting an inexperienced person with opportunities for significant service assignments. However, we can be assured that the God who equipped a shepherd boy to be a king, and entrusted a young Jewish maiden to raise His only Son, will be there to help, guide, and strengthen the dedicated but inexperienced new preacher who accepts the challenge of delivering the Word of God.

Observation: As the new minister begins to accept more responsibilities in God's service, a necessary part of our mentoring role is that of observation. We will need to unobtrusively monitor how he or she is doing, noting particular strengths and talents as well as areas where instruction is needed. As we meet with the person one-on-one, we should do our best to establish a level of trust and friendship that will give the beginning minister freedom to express his concerns and questions. It will be important to offer encouragement at this stage. We should be sympathetic, supportive, and give attention to feelings of inadequacies or uncertainty that emerge.

Since God made us unique individuals, the new ministers we train will not necessarily have our personal strengths, preferences, or way of doing things. While there is room in the Gospel for a variety of styles and manners of expression, it will be vital for us to both verbalize and consistently model loyalty and wholehearted commitment to the Apostolic Faith doctrine and practices.

Evaluation: We want to be sure that the evaluation phase of the training process is done in a spirit of love, fairness, compassion, and humility. No matter how many years of experience we may have in the ministry,

we are all still learning. Even Paul the Apostle, after exhorting the believers at Philippi, acknowledged, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:12).

At times, the evaluation phase may be most useful when our own thoughts, observations, and impressions are combined with feedback from others. For example, if we do not have the opportunity to directly observe the new minister in the role of Sunday school teacher or Gospel team participant, it would be appropriate to ask the department head or team leader for his or her input. Obviously, this must be done tactfully, and care taken to preserve confidentiality and the spirit of unity.

Some points to consider in the evaluation stage are:

- Is the life and behavior of the new minister consistent with the Biblical requirements for those in the ministry?
- Does evidence of an ongoing commitment to prayer and personal development exist?
- Is faithfulness to sound doctrine and the practices of the Apostolic Faith organization demonstrated?
- Is there follow through on responsibilities in the Lord's work?
- Are family commitments and employment obligations properly prioritized?
- Is there effective interaction with others in the church?
- Is concern and a servant's heart toward all demonstrated, along with an eagerness to reach out to the lost when there is an opportunity?

After we have had a sufficient period of time to observe and evaluate the new minister, we will want to update our District Supervisor or the Superintendent General of how that one is progressing.

As we do our best to identify individuals who may have a call to preach the Word, we look to God for direction and wisdom in this important task. While our goal is to guide new ministers in the path of growing spiritual maturity and the development of ministerial skills, their ultimate success is not our responsibility. We may have a part in watering the seed, but it is God who gives the increase.

It is very rewarding to see ones we have mentored grow and develop their talents, and become capable workers in God's harvest field. When that happens, we will say with the Apostle John, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 1:4).

[1] For a more complete description of the qualification of a minister, see the section of this manual titled *Spiritual Qualifications*.

Counsel for Ministers

There may be occasions when an individual approaches us and indicates that he or she feels a call to the ministry, or asks how a person knows if they are called to preach. Even if we feel assured that the person is spiritually qualified, it is advisable to refrain from moving forward with a commitment without first consulting with our District Superintendent or Superintendent General.

At times when such an approach is made, we may feel certain the person is *not* spiritually qualified, or there are other reasons why he or she would be ineligible to participate in the ministry. Such cases must be han-

dled carefully and with compassion and tact, so we do not discourage that one in their spiritual walk with God. We may wish to point out that everyone is called by God to serve in His kingdom, so in one sense of the word, every Christian is a minister. No task in God's service is "above" other tasks. Preaching the Word is not a goal to achieve; rather, we must all humbly submit ourselves to God and be willing to serve in whatever capacity He deems best.

Many times those in spiritual authority in the church must wait before God to discern His leading before a clear conclusion can be reached regarding whether a person who feels he is called to preach should join the ranks of the ministry at that time.

One indicator that an individual is called to preach is that nobody in the congregation is surprised when that individual steps to the pulpit for the first time to do so.

Working with Committees

Our role as pastors (or ministers) in the Apostolic Faith organization at times may include guiding groups of individuals who have been appointed to perform some service or function. Whether these groups are identified as committees or teams, are structured formally or informally, or are comprised of many individuals or few, our interaction with brothers and sisters in Christ has spiritual implications.

Implementing the following guidelines will help to increase your church committee effectiveness.

- *Seek God's guidance*—It is a good practice to open and close each session with prayer.
- *Establish order*—Limit discussion to one subject at a time. Begin on time and work from a prepared agenda. Establish the length of the meeting at the beginning, and stick to it.
- *Delegate carefully*—Assign the right people to the right job.
- *Strive for unity*—Difference of opinion will occur, but set a climate for cooperation. Work hard to preserve harmony in the church and do your best to encourage consensus.
- *Communicate clearly*—Make sure that all committee members are well-informed. Withheld information and surprises will cause problems. Communication between team members should be spontaneous and non-restrictive.
- *Expect change*—Any progress requires change on someone's part. The issue is how change will be proposed, implemented, accepted, and what it will accomplish.
- *Pray for wisdom*—James says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not" (James 1:5).

Remember, those who participate on committees generally are doing so as volunteers. We want to appreciate their efforts and treat them with respect and consideration.

General Instructions for Services

Overview of Church Services

Both the Old and New Testaments refer to God's people gathering together at specific places to worship Him. Old Testament public worship took place primarily in the Tabernacle and subsequent Temple, where God dwelt among His people. In the New Testament, believers of the Early Church were "continually in the temple, praising and blessing God" (Luke 24:53).

In Acts 8, we read that the Holy Spirit sent Philip to the city of Samaria, where he preached Christ. The people "with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake" (Acts 8:6), and that response brought great joy in the city. Meetings of this nature occurred all through the New Testament where the Apostles and other dedicated individuals led the way in preaching the gospel of Christ. Similar efforts continued down through the ages by those who recognized that the church of the Living God is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15).

The writer of Hebrews instructed the readers of his epistle not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, but to gather "so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25). That admonition clearly applies in our day. Since its inception in 1906, the Apostolic Faith organization has placed a premium on holding Gospel services, viewing them as a primary means of proclaiming the Biblical doctrines of salvation, sanctification, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and of nurturing to spiritual maturity those who give their hearts to God.

The Word of God gives only a few specific instructions regarding how church services should be conducted, but it does offer many indicators as to the spirit and manner in which worship services should take place.[1] Scripture teaches that:

- Church services should glorify God and encourage worship of Him.[2]
- The Spirit of God, as our Guide and Teacher, should be present.[3]
- Church services should take place in an orderly manner.[4]
- Music and song are appropriate expressions of praise and worship.[5]
- Spiritual leaders in church services should fill roles based upon the pattern established in the New Testament.[6]
- The unsaved should be pointed to their need of salvation.[7]
- Messages should instruct, edify, and ground the people of God in their faith, teaching them to "observe" [practice] all things which Jesus commanded.[8]
- Those who participate in church services should be spiritually qualified, and serve in the ability that God has given.[9]
- The purposes and activities of the church should include teaching biblical doctrine, providing a place of fellowship for believers, observing the Lord's Supper, and praying.[10]

We conduct services in our Apostolic Faith churches in a simple manner, and generally avoid formal liturgical practices. For example, our pastors and ministers do not wear clergy vestments. Our congregations do not use prayer books, though Bibles are available in many of our churches so the congregation can follow along when Scriptures are read aloud. We deliver our sermons extemporaneously, rather than reading them.

Typically, each church service is comprised of three main parts. Following a musical prelude, the first segment consists of congregational singing and a prayer led by a minister. After a brief welcome and any necessary announcements, the second part of the service generally features personal testimonies interspersed with songs by the congregation. This part ends with a special song by a soloist or vocal ensemble. (Occasionally this second portion of the meeting is given over to other purposes than personal testimonies, as in the case of a devotional or dedication service.) The third and final portion of the service is the preaching of the Word of God, and concludes with an altar call and a closing invitational song and prayer. In summary, most of our church services follow this pattern:

Suggested Order of Service

- Musical prelude
- Welcome
- Congregational Singing
- Prayer, usually by a minister, while the congregation stands
- Announcements
- Special song by vocal ensemble or soloist
- Personal testimony period, or Scripture reading (Sunday morning)
- Special song by vocal ensemble or soloist
- Sermon
- Invitation song by congregation
- Benediction
- Altar Service

For the most part, Apostolic Faith services are open to the public, and we extend a welcome to anyone who wishes to attend.[11] We do not keep formal membership rolls, focusing instead on encouraging those who come to make sure their names are written in Heaven. For reference and legal purposes, we do maintain a record of those who we baptize in water.

Throughout our history, the Apostolic Faith work has been supported financially by tithes and offerings.[12] We make no solicitations of the public in our services, nor do we take collections. Instead, offering boxes are placed near the entry of each church, where those in attendance may put tithes and freewill offerings as they feel led.

Our church buildings are generally functional and practical, and conservative rather than ornate in style. We do not display religious statuary in our churches. Most Apostolic Faith churches have platforms in the front of the sanctuary, where the choir, instrumentalists, and ministers participating in the meeting are seated facing the audience. Song leaders direct the singing and ministers preach the Word of God from a single pulpit positioned at the front of the platform. Altar benches where the congregation is invited to pray after the service occupy the space between the platform and the area where the congregation is seated.

Although church buildings, service schedules, and congregation size varies from location to location, certain aspects of Apostolic Faith services are consistent around the world. Those aspects are covered in the following sections of this manual.

[1] For more on this topic, see the section of this manual titled *Worship.*

[2] Psalm 100:4; Romans 15:6; Ephesians 3:8-9

[3] John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:12-13; 1 John 2:27

[4] 1 Corinthians 14:26, 33, 40

[5] Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16

[6] 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11-12

[7] Ezekiel 33:7-9; Romans 10:13-15; Colossians 1:28

[8] Matthew 28:20; Ephesians 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 4:2

[9] 1 Peter 4:11

[10] Acts 2:42

[11] Obviously this excludes any individuals who come with an intent to disrupt the meeting, propagate false doctrine, or have a criminal or predatory intent.

[12] This method of financing the Gospel work is based on Malachi 3:8-10; and 2 Corinthians 9:7. For more on this topic, see the section of this manual titled *Tithes and Offerings*.

Counsel for Ministers

We must convey spiritual energy in our Gospel services. This is more than enthusiasm, eloquence, magnetism, or charisma. It is intensity of passion—an earnest spirit anointed by the Spirit of God.

Every part of a meeting should be anointed by the Holy Spirit. We want the songs, selection of music, testimonies, and, above all, the sermon, to be so inspired that those in attendance will feel inexorably drawn toward God. We want every unconverted individual to be so strongly convicted of sin that he can never say he had no inward urging to salvation. God forbid that sinners leave without being convinced of their need for Him!

Dancing has no part in Apostolic Faith church services. When dancing is referred to in the Old Testament times, it occurred primarily at significant historical occasions, such as the winning of a great battle. No indication is given of dance occurring within the New Testament church, and neither Jesus nor His Apostles allude to dancing as a method of worship. In fact, there are only five references to dancing in the New Testament (see Matthew 11:16-17; 14:6, Mark 6:22; Luke 7:31-32; 15:22-25), and none of these passages have anything to do with congregational worship. Dancing, even under the guise of worship, appeals to the baser instincts of human nature. By nature it is immodest and provocative and therefore has no part in an Apostolic Faith church setting.

At times, some suggest modifying the format of our services in order to make them more "relevant" in today's world. Extreme care must be taken in this regard lest we only succeed in becoming irrelevant. Our purpose is not to entertain, to hold group therapy sessions, or to engage in spiritual pep rallies. Rather, we gather to hold Gospel meetings. We cannot improve upon that! While some degree of variation or creativity in approach is acceptable, it must never be done at the cost of compromise of our message. To do so fails to benefit those inside or outside the church.

We want to do everything in our power to ensure a holy, reverent spirit in the church sanctuary, reminding our congregations that Jesus said, "My house shall be called the house of prayer" (Matthew 21:13). Fellowshipping with other believers is important and necessary, but whenever possible this should take place in an entry or outside area rather than in the sanctuary where services are held. Our primary goal should be to create an atmosphere in the sanctuary where the Spirit of God will be pleased to dwell and bless His people.

Welcoming Visitors

It is important to remember that when visitors attend our Apostolic Faith services for the first time, their initial impression may determine their permanent attitude toward the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We only have one opportunity to make a positive first impression upon newcomers.

Visitors need to feel welcome, so it is important to put friendly, outgoing people in charge of greeting guests at church. It is a good practice to station greeters near the church entry to help people locate the nursery, Sunday school classrooms, elevator, or other facilities. Teach greeters and ushers to watch for people who might need additional help, such as those with strollers and small children, or people who need physical assistance.

In addition, we should encourage all of our congregation members to notice people who are attending for the first time, and to be welcoming. While we appreciate the fellowship we have with one another, we must take care that in enjoying each other's company, the newcomers among us do not feel excluded.

During the service, the pastor or minister in charge should welcome from the pulpit visitors to the meeting; this is often done during the announcements after the initial period of congregational singing. While we want to make sure newcomers know that we are happy they have come, it generally is not advisable, at least in the United States, to make them conspicuous by asking them to stand when everyone else is seated or to raise their hand so others can identify them.

As pastors and ministers, we will want to be in the prayer room before services and at the altars after the services. This can make greeting visitors a challenge, but we can assign that to an associate minister, or as the occasion may demand, step away from the altar service for a few minutes ourselves.

During the singing of the closing hymn, it may be helpful to have a minister or designated workers go to the rear of the sanctuary to greet each departing visitor and extend a cordial invitation to return. The ministers should be alert to any indicators that the visiting individual would like to pray, and be ready to encourage them to do so as the Spirit leads.

Greeters or ushers should offer a recent edition of one of the Apostolic Faith publications to all first time visitors, and the visitor's attention directed to the literature rack where samples of our other publications are available. In some of our churches, the greeters/ushers ask guests to fill out a visitor information card for follow-up or notification of upcoming special events.

Prayer Before the Service

One unique aspect of Apostolic Faith churches worldwide is the focus on prayer. In accordance with Jesus' words, "My house shall be called the house of prayer" (Matthew 21:13), workers gather before each service in a prayer room separate from the sanctuary to ask God for His blessing upon the upcoming meeting. A few minutes before the service, the pastor or minister in charge signals for a temporary cessation of prayer. Written prayer requests that have been placed on a table or pulpit in the prayer room are read aloud—requests that ask prayer for physical healing, deliverance from problems, spiritual guidance, the salvation of others, and for individuals to receive their deeper spiritual experiences. The minister reminds those present to pray for the service about to begin, as well as for the individuals who specifically requested prayer. Then the workers go back to their knees and bring these requests before the Lord.

When Apostolic Faith musicians, platform workers, and ministers enter the sanctuary prior to a service, they kneel at their seats and pray for God's presence to anoint and direct in the meeting.[1] This is far more than a mere formality. Prayer helps to establish a feeling of reverence in the sanctuary, and prepares hearts to be in tune with His Spirit and focused on Him. We want the glory of God to rest upon our meetings, and we have learned by years of experience that prayer is what brings that about.

After a short period of prayer, the musicians and ministers take their seats, following the lead of the pastor. (The musicians may need to do so before the ministers, if they are participating in the prelude.)

[1] In cases where the church platform is too small to allow the musicians to kneel, we recommend that they bow their heads in prayer until the ministers are seated.

Counsel for Ministers:

It is not necessary for the ministry and workers to kneel in prayer at their seats before participating in special occasions at the church such as concerts, weddings, funerals, etc.

In some of our churches, prayer requests are read during the church service for the whole congregation to hear. In other locations, after the requests are read aloud in the prayer room, one person leads in prayer before dismissing the workers to go into the service. All of these approaches are appropriate.

Opening the Service and Announcements

After the musical prelude which begins most of our church services, the pastor or minister in charge briefly welcomes those in attendance. If that is our role, we then announce the first congregational song, or turn the service over to a song leader to do so.

Following a period of congregational singing and an opening prayer, we give the upcoming schedule and make any pertinent announcements. If the service is being broadcast live, we should give the full name and street address of the church, and invite those listening to the broadcast to personally attend the services if they have an opportunity.

Sometimes we extend a special welcome to visitors from other Apostolic Faith branch churches who are known to the members of our local congregation. Here in the United States, it is usually best to refrain from directing specific attention to first-time visitors who we do not know. Rather, we merely acknowledge them in a general way, making sure they know we are happy they have chosen to attend, and inviting them to return.[1]

After welcoming guests, we may make any necessary announcements. These should be brief, primarily offering information about times and dates of upcoming services, scheduled music practices, and/or special events pertaining to the church. If multiple details need to be conveyed regarding a particular event, it is best to post detailed information on a bulletin board in our church and simply refer the congregation to that.

[1] The custom of a general welcome rather than specifically acknowledging a visitor may be culturally influenced. In some areas of the world it would be considered unfriendly or even insulting not to specifically acknowledge a visitor. In such cases, it is fine to follow the accepted protocol of the region and make the welcome more personal and specific.

Counsel to Ministers:

We should avoid inserting details into the church service that have nothing to do with the Lord or the Lord's work. The focus of Gospel services should be on meeting with God. God did not tell Moses to make an announcement about how to prepare manna. He said, "Put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them" (Numbers 6:27).

Music in the Service

Music has long been a part of the Apostolic Faith church services. The Psalmist encouraged vocal music in the house of the Lord when he wrote, "Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints." (Psalm 149:1). He alluded to instrumental music in Psalm 150, where we read, "Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: . . . Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. . . Praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord" (Psalm 150:1-6).

Since music often inspires a spirit of worship and communion with the Almighty God, we incorporate vocal selections into nearly all Apostolic Faith meetings. Instruments ranging from piano, keyboard, or organ, to orchestras comprised of string, woodwind, and brass instruments, are often used when the size and abilities of the congregation makes this possible.

Prelude

Reverent music prior to the opening of a church service creates an atmosphere of worship that invites the Spirit of God to be present among us, and focuses our hearts on spiritual matters. In most of our services, the organist or pianist plays hymns or other appropriate sacred music for five or ten minutes before a meeting. Often a piece performed by an instrumental or vocal soloist or ensemble concludes the opening musical selections. The music provided at this point is intended to remind the people assembling in the sanctuary to be in a spirit of prayer.

While the prelude generally begins a few minutes prior to the scheduled opening time, the service itself should begin promptly at the announced time.

Congregational Singing

Congregational singing gives everyone present an opportunity to participate in the service and to personally engage in offering praise to God. Over the years, people have been drawn to services to hear the old, welll-oved hymns played and sung in the true spirit of worship, and to join in the singing themselves.

After the prelude, most Apostolic Faith services continue with a few congregational songs being sung before an initial standing prayer. After prayer and any necessary announcements, another song is usually sung to open the personal testimony part of the service. Choruses or single verses of songs are interspersed between testimonies, and the assembled congregation also joins in singing a closing number after the sermon and just prior to the benediction.

When available, instrumental accompaniment adds dimension and musical support to the united voices. As the pastor or minister in charge, we may be the one who announces and directs the orchestra and congregation, but this also may be done by a music leader. Whoever leads the singing, attention to the following guidelines will help ensure that this portion of the service is effective.

Choose the congregational songs thoughtfully. Consider the type of service in making selections. The style of music chosen for a youth service will likely vary from what might be selected for a Sunday morning service.

Consider song types. The selection of songs is very important, and many a service has benefited by the use of the proper songs at the correct moment. Hymns are valuable for reinforcing doctrinal points. Choruses lend themselves to praise and worship. A balance between the two is generally appropriate.

Announce song number clearly. If an orchestra is accompanying the congregational singing, give them time to locate the correct page in their hymnbooks by announcing the number, the title of the song, and then repeating the number. If not all the verses are to be sung, make it clear which ones will be sung. Many of

our churches have some sort of indicator (manual or electronic) which also announces the song numbers if hymnals are being used.

Keep comments brief. Occasionally a few remarks about the song itself, a verbal "bridge" between two types of songs or topics, or an exhortation to wholehearted participation in the singing is fitting. However, this can quickly become trite, so it is usually best to be succinct.

Allow time for the congregation to find the song. Sometimes the final stanza of the song, played by the organist, pianist, orchestra, or all of them together, is played as an introduction. This gives the congregation time to find the song and also to familiarize itself with what is to be sung. At other times, a chord by the organ or keyboard establishes the key, and no other musical introduction is necessary.

Direct at an appropriate tempo. The beat established should not be faster than a person can comfortably sing the words.

Stay at the pulpit. The music leader should direct the congregation throughout the whole song service, rather than sitting down after the first verse and chorus. Staying at the pulpit helps the congregation and accompanists to stay together, and makes it easier to maintain the tempo.

Use the musicians. If an orchestra is available, have them play during congregational singing. They should not sing through the majority of the song service while holding their instruments. Keep in mind that those who are playing instruments have spent time practicing and tuning up so they can play with the song service.

Keep to the agreed upon time frame. An approximate time allotted to congregational singing should be understood between the pastor and song leader. The length of the prelude will determine the length of the song service, if a time frame has already been established. Sometimes there may only be time for one song, and sometimes you may have time for five.

Select an appropriate closing song. Generally, our services conclude with a familiar invitation type congregational song. This closing number should lend itself to an altar call—perhaps a hymn that encourages people to pray. The closing song is followed by the final benediction.

Special musical numbers

The musical selections presented by vocalists and instrumentalists in the course of a church service contribute greatly to the beauty and holy nature of our church services. The messages contained in an anointed Gospel song have inspired and encouraged countless hearts over the years.

Following are a few guidelines for this aspect of music ministry.

Focus on honoring God. If a musical number is to be effective in ministering to the audience, it must be anointed by the Holy Spirit. The choice of numbers and the style of presentation should always be pointed toward honoring God and bringing glory to Him, rather than to displaying the performer's talent.

Select appropriately. Special singers should choose their own songs, as they know best the selections that will fit their voices, their style of singing, and their vocal range. The choir conductor, however, will choose the singer(s) for any choir number that features a vocal solo or ensemble.

Use qualified musicians. Those who participate in the music at Apostolic Faith church services must be born-again Christians and Apostolic Faith church members. They should be chosen to fill a place because of their willingness of heart and consecrated lives as well as for their musical talent. Since all who take part in a service represent the Gospel of Jesus Christ, singers and instrumentalists should wear appropriately modest attire. Musicians from a branch Apostolic Faith church may be used when they are visiting locally. If a guest is used from another branch, it is advisable to provide time for them to practice with the local accompanist ahead of the church service.

Limit personal comments. Musicians or vocalists who present a selection during a church service generally should not give a mini-sermon or share personal thoughts before or after the music selection. (There may be occasional exceptions to this guideline, if an explanation or description will add to the spirit and intent of the selection. Comments of this nature should be approved ahead of time by the music director and/or pastor.) It is appropriate for vocalists to testify following their presentation if their song occurs during the testimony portion of the service.

Make sure the accompaniment is balanced. While vocalists may have an instrumentalist or an ensemble accompany them, care should be taken that words remain distinct. If a microphone system is used, the person adjusting the system can be helpful in this regard. The accompaniment should never predominate, as the spiritual message is in the words.

Consider the lyrics. The words to the songs sung in a Gospel meeting should be doctrinally sound and have a message that will inspire and/or instruct the listeners in the themes of the Gospel. They should also fit the nature of the meeting—the choice of song for a baby dedication, for example, will be quite different from what would be chosen for a church dedication.

Postlude

After the closing prayer, some in the congregation move toward the altar to pray, while others begin to leave the auditorium. To encourage a spirit of prayer, our accompanists follow the practice of playing a postlude at the close of each service.

Counsel to Ministers

The size of our congregation or the particular talents of our members may not allow a full orchestra or large choir in our local church. However, we want to encourage spiritually qualified individuals to participate in our church music ministry, whatever its size. In addition to providing a musical foundation for congregational singing, this approach involves more people in our service than just the preacher and song leader.

We should help our musicians to regard their part in the work of the Lord as a privilege—never as a right or a duty. Young people should be encouraged to learn an instrument and/or to perfect their vocal abilities with the goal of one day taking part in the music ministry of the church.

Be sensitive to keeping a balance between contemporary and traditional musical styles in church music. While you may have a personal preference for a certain type of Gospel music, recognize that individual tastes in music vary and there is a range of what is appropriate for a Gospel meeting. While it is important to make sure that our music avoids flamboyancy or any mimicking of worldly entertainment, a variation in type of music can keep our services appealing to all age groups.

It is best not to have more than one unfamiliar song in a service. When a new song is introduced, it will be learned more quickly if music (rather than words only) can be provided for the congregation.

It is our responsibility as pastors to make sure our church musicians are aware of and observe all copyright laws. Only copyright owners may authorize duplication of their work. Duplicating printed or recorded music without authorization from the copyright owner is illegal and dishonest. For more on this subject, see the section of this manual titled *Copyright Issues*.

Prayer in the Service

It is customary in Apostolic Faith services for one of the ministers to give a brief prayer shortly after the meeting begins, asking for God's blessing upon the service. Often this occurs after the congregation has joined in singing a few songs, and prior to announcements.

If we are leading the service, we may give the prayer ourselves or call upon another minister or elder in the congregation to do so. When we lead in public prayer, it is best to use the pronoun "we" rather than "I," because we are praying on behalf of the entire congregation. We ask for God's Spirit and blessing to rest upon each part of the service, and acknowledge that all glory goes to Him. It is also appropriate to ask for God to be with the sick and those unable to be present. While there is much to lay before God in prayer, our prayers should not become lengthy nor should we make any attempt to be all-inclusive. Also, we should avoid admonishing or exhorting in our prayers, remembering that we are not preaching but praying.

It is important to make sure our words are enunciated clearly and slowly enough to be understood by those present. Our prayers will be most effective if we avoid trying to sound eloquent or officious. While we are mindful that we are approaching a holy God, and reverence is certainly necessary, it is best to use simple speech and normal vernacular. Our purpose should be to unite the hearts of those present, and focus attention on the Spirit who is so necessary in the service.

At the conclusion of each service, the minister in charge gives a closing benediction or appoints one of the other ministers to do so. This prayer should be brief, simply invoking God's blessing upon those who leave the sanctuary, as well as upon the altar service.

We should always end our prayers with "In Jesus' name, Amen."

Counsel for Ministers

Some ministers choose to raise one hand as they pronounce the benediction, as an indicator of the blessing being pronounced upon the people. This is a matter of personal choice.

We should be mindful of how many times we invoke the name of God in our prayers. Every other word does not need to be "Lord," although occasional use is appropriate since that is who we are addressing.

Public Reading of Scripture

When we read Scripture aloud in a Gospel service, either as part of the sermon or in a separate reading earlier in the service, we must do so reverently and with care. The Word of God contains challenge and demand, hope and assurance, promise and comfort, reproof and exhortation. We should consider the Biblical message and mood of the chosen passage, and do our best to accurately convey its meaning. A monotonous rendition will cause the minds of the congregation to drift, while reading with appropriate expression and conviction will focus the audience's attention. We do not read the Scriptures aloud to draw attention to our elocutionary abilities nor to provide dramatic entertainment, but the Word of God cannot come alive to our listeners if it is read in a lifeless manner.

It is important to read at a rate that promotes comprehension. Some Biblical passages include unfamiliar words or phraseology, and meaning must be derived from context, so our reading should be measured enough to allow for mental processing. Other verbal elements also impact the effectiveness of our delivery. These include voice pitch (high/low), volume (soft/loud), enunciation (clarity), and pronunciation (correctness). The congregation should never have to struggle to understand what we are saying.

If people in the audience are following along in their Bibles, we need to give them time to locate the text before we begin. Sometimes this can be accomplished by stating where the text will be found, pausing briefly, and then repeating the text location. It is a good practice to raise our eyes to the audience occasionally as we read, as this will heighten the impression that our words are directly addressed to them.

Generally the pastor or minister in charge of a particular meeting chooses the passage to be read aloud and appoints someone to read it. The portion selected should be in keeping with the type of service. We may pick Scripture relating to a theme being developed in the meeting, or a group of verses that support or amplify the subject of the sermon. Other options could be one of the many reassuring passages found in the Psalms, or a selection of verses from the Epistles with their admonitions to godliness. As with all parts of a service, we should ask God to direct in the selection of appropriate Scriptures, guiding us to verses that will speak to the hearts of those present.

Counsel for Ministers

When we are asked to give the Scripture reading in a particular service, it is advisable to review the passage ahead of time if possible. This will give us an opportunity to note the correct pronunciation of Biblical names and places, and give us a sense of the theme of the passage so we can correctly emphasize key words and phrases.

We recommend using a traditional print Bible for formal, public reading of the Scriptures, rather than reading from an electronic device. We have no objection, however, to audience members following along on such devices.

Personal Testimonies

The testimony period is a vital part of Apostolic Faith Church services. The Spirit-anointed testimony of an individual who has been delivered from sin is a compelling witness—while unbelievers may debate the content of a sermon, it is difficult to contest the words of a person who is simply telling his or her own experience.

Those in our congregations who have been truly born again should be encouraged to testify. The importance of telling what God has done for us is taught in Psalm 107:2, where the Psalmist exhorts, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy." The result of giving our testimonies is related in Revelation 12:11, where we read that the brethren overcame their accuser, Satan, "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony."

As pastors, we need to remind the workers from time to time to make sure this part of the meeting is well-balanced and inspiring. They should be encouraged to watch for lulls in the testimony service, and be quick to get to their feet and tell of what God has done in their lives.

Testimonies should be short, to the point, and given in the spirit of genuine and heartfelt praise. A recital of recent trials is never edifying; while challenges arise and trials come, testimonies should focus on how the Lord stood by and brought victory. Those who testify should be encouraged to tell how God led them to salvation, and the change He made in their lives at that point. It is also appropriate to share when and how the deeper Christian experiences of sanctification and the baptism of the Holy Ghost were received. At times, those who testify may be led to give thanks for divine healing, God's protection and guidance, and other answers to prayer. Hearing of God's working in the lives of fellow Christians is an encouragement to all.

Sometimes the pastor or minister in charge may feel led to ask a visitor or other worker to open the testimony service, but for the most part, those who testify are not appointed. Generally, testimonies given in our church services are interspersed with choruses or single verses of songs by the congregation. The testimony service concludes with a special song sung by a vocal ensemble or soloist.

Counsel for Ministers

It is always good to end the testimony portion of a service on a strong note. If a particular testimony is definitely anointed, we may want to signal for the last special, as a compelling conclusion to the testimony service is a good springboard to the sermon.

As ministers, we must make sure the testimony service moves along. If a lull occurs and nobody testifies, the audience becomes uncomfortable and wonders why nobody is getting up. At such times we should set the example in being quick to get to our feet and testify. (The only exception would be if we are scheduled to preach in that service.)

If testimonies in a particular service are rambling, vague, or incomplete, we should be ready to stand up and offer a compelling, definite witness to the power of God to change a life. There may be someone in the service who needs to hear a clear description of the reality of God's power to save.

If lengthy testimonies at our location are consistently a drag on the tempo of a meeting, we may wish to implement a time limit, consistently applied to everyone. For example, two minutes allows sufficient time to glorify God for answered prayers even if it does not allow for sharing all of the details.

The Message

As ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, our sermons should present the truth of God's Word in a manner that will bring conviction to sinners and edification to believers. Paul admonished Timothy to "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:2), and that is our challenge as well.

When we stand behind the pulpit in an Apostolic Faith Church service to bring a message from God's Word, there is a congregation in front of us that needs to hear Good News. To minister effectively, we need a vision of people who are spiritually needy—people who have broken hearts and lives, people who are struggling with sin, people who face a whole range of physical, emotional, and spiritual challenges in life. We should pray until God gives us sermons that heal and liberate, that herald good tidings.

When our Lord Jesus walked this earth, He said that He was going to comfort all who mourn, and "give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" (Isaiah 61:3). As we study the text that Jesus presented in his home town, we find the people marveled at the wonderful, beautiful, and gracious words that proceeded from His lips. That is what we are striving for. When we stand up in the pulpit, we need to pray that gracious words will proceed from our lips.

We should never apologize for the Gospel. Our task is to deliver God's Word without apprehension or concern about the response of our listeners. We are presenting a way to live life here on earth without condemnation and sin, and hope of eternal life in Heaven. That is Good News! We are not ashamed of the message we preach, and if it is presented right, it will appeal to people's hearts. Let us remember this: our supreme concern in the pulpit must not be our sermon, but the spiritual welfare of the people.

In 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, Paul said, "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 the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Every sermon should have as its ultimate goal the bringing of men and women to a realization of their need before God and His all-sufficiency to meet that need. We want our sermons to be inspired by the Holy Ghost and to motivate individuals to pray.

For a more complete exposition of sermons in the Apostolic Faith churches, read the topics titled *Sermon Preparation* and *Sermon Delivery* in this Manual.

Counsel for Ministers

Most sermons could be categorized as being doctrinal, devotional, or evangelistic in nature. *Doctrinal* sermons include those that provide a better understanding of Bible theology. *Devotional* messages include the encouraging, "feel good" type of messages. *Evangelistic* sermons tend to inspire action on the part of sinners and those seeking their deeper spiritual experiences. All three types of sermons are necessary, but as pastors, we may be advised to think doctrinal frequently, especially when we are preaching predominantly to those who have already given their hearts to the Lord. Understanding and living by Biblical doctrine is essential to being a Christian. Devotional teaching will strengthen the hearer for a day or week, but doctrinal teaching builds a spiritual foundation and will undergird a Christian for the rest of his life.

It pays to know and preach the theology of the Latter Rain Gospel because that is the niche God has called us to fill. As ministers, we must be true to our God-given mandate to faithfully deliver the same faith and practices to the next generation that were delivered to our generation. We must never think ourselves wiser or more enlightened than the dedicated Gospel veterans who taught what this organization has stood for through the years.

Our doctrine is what distinguishes us from other churches. When we preach it, we must do so in a manner that makes it practical and achievable. The doctrines we uphold are relevant to this day. We may endure pressure when we purpose to hold fast to them, because most organizations who once held views similar to what we continue to hold have since deviated from them. Their effort to win the world by accommodating its longings has not only failed to win the world, but has made their diluted message less appealing to spiritually hungry souls in the world. We must be careful not to follow down the same path, but to embrace the challenge to effectively pass on the faith entrusted to the saints once for all.

The Altar Service

The focal point of Apostolic Faith church services is the altar service which concludes each Gospel meeting. We invite those in attendance to come forward to the benches which line the front or to pray in the pews or seats throughout the sanctuary, and bring their petitions and praise before God in prayer. Something special happens in people's lives when they pray. They are taking a step of faith saying, "God, I believe You are the answer, and I am stepping out in faith believing You will meet me." That is the beginning of the work of God in any individual's life.

An Apostolic Faith paper, published at the close of one of our early camp meetings, related: "Whole families, people who were hardened in sin, people from the better walks of society, professed Christians, and even ministers, found salvation at the old, tear-stained altars where hundreds wept their hearts out to God." That still takes place today. Wherever Apostolic Faith camp meetings and church services are held, people gather at the place of prayer, just as they did in years past.

Altar services are far from being a mere formality in Apostolic Faith Church services. They are a cherished part of our church practice, and one which sets our organization apart from most of the church denominations of our day. Over the years, countless individuals have prayed through to genuine, life-transforming experiences with God at the simple wooden benches at the front of our sanctuaries around the world. The united faith, prayer, and spirit of the people of God are an encouragement to saved and unsaved alike as they approach God.

One of our responsibilities as ministers is to watch for visitors who come forward to pray, to discern whether there are signs of spiritual hunger or a desire to reach out to God. In such cases, we will want to be sure that we or another minister or worker prays with and encourages them. As a general rule, altar workers should pray with persons of their own gender. It is often more effective for one worker to kneel with a seeker and encourage that one than for several to gather around, as it may be difficult for a seeker to freely open his heart on a personal level when there are many present.

When we pray with individuals who are seeking the Lord, we should rely on the Spirit of God to direct our approach and our words. It is advisable to watch for indicators that the person praying is ill-at-ease or uncomfortable, and do our best to alleviate any sense of awkwardness.

We should listen carefully for verbal clues that will help us know whether the person praying is expressing a spiritual need, seeking a particular experience, or simply needing God's strength and encouragement. It is critically important to use tact and care when we are trying to identify the spiritual concerns of individuals we are praying with. People could be offended if we assume they are sinners when they are not, or have not come to the point of acknowledging that fact. For that reason, we should never pray for a seeker to receive a specific spiritual experience unless we know the person and are sure they will be receptive.

Our words of encouragement should be gentle rather than condemning; we do not want the one we are praying with to become defensive. We should avoid unwarranted familiarity with those who come to pray—even an arm around the shoulder or patting of the hand could be misinterpreted or offensive to people we do not know. Naturally, we must be even more cautious when praying with someone of the opposite gender.

We should take care never to interrupt a worker who is dealing with a person seeking salvation unless that worker indicates that he needs assistance. And we should be extremely careful lest, in our desire for the one praying to express a definite assurance, we unwittingly pressure someone to claim an experience not yet received.

We want to make every effort to insure that any person who prays through to salvation has definite instruction in how to succeed in the Christian life before he or she leaves the church. One way to accomplish this is to give the individual an appropriate selection of Gospel literature to encourage them in this new way of life.

As ministers, we also should be alert to those who are seeking God for their deeper experiences during the altar services. Those who are saved should be encouraged to consecrate their lives and seek God for the experience of sanctification, the second definite work of grace which brings heart purity and holiness. We should urge sanctified believers to go deeper with God and receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire, an infilling of power from on High. Those who have received these foundational spiritual experiences find the altar services times of special communion with God, as they bring their needs and petitions before Him, gain spiritual stamina and encouragement, and receive precious blessings.

During this prayer time at the close of the service, ministers also pray for the sick or afflicted who wish to be anointed with oil and prayed for as directed in James 5:14-15. Usually those individuals signify their desire by taking a seat on the platform, or approaching one of the ministers directly. For instructions regarding prayer for the sick, see the sections of this manual titled *Ministering to the Sick and Shut In.*

Counsel for Ministers

At times when the Spirit of the Lord is moving during an altar service, an individual may become caught up in fleshly demonstration or fanaticism. If that happens, the pastor or another minister or worker should kneel down by the person and quietly let him know that such praying is causing a distraction for others who are trying to pray. We have no desire to quench a true moving of the Spirit of God, but we must be mindful that Scripture indicates that all parts of a church service should take place in a decent and in orderly manner.

It is encouraging when the ministers and workers come forward to pray during the altar call song. As ministers and pastors, our presence at the altar services is important. Not only does it benefit us personally, but it sets a good example to our congregations. We should make it a point to be in prayer before and after each service for about thirty minutes if at all possible. By faithfully participating in this way, we demonstrate that we put a true priority on prayer.

We should not be hesitant to lead out in audible prayer. This takes discipline and concentration, but our spirit and earnestness will be an encouragement to those in the prayer room and around the altars.

We must refrain from conducting business—even God's business—in the altar area. It is easy to start a conversation thinking it will only take a few seconds, but all too often that few seconds lengthens. If a matter must be addressed immediately, we should step away from the altar area to do so, and return to prayer as quickly as we can.

Altar services are not necessarily used at the conclusion of a concert, recital, or other special events held in the church. The pastor, in conjunction with those who are in charge of presenting the concert or special event, will make the decision as to whether or not an altar service is an appropriate closing.

Types of Services

Sunday Morning Service

Sunday morning services in Apostolic Faith churches generally have a slightly different tone than the evangelistic services which comprise most of our regular church services, although the order is similar. In keeping with the admonition in John 4:24, "They that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth," the mood is reverent and focused on worship.[1] Each aspect of the service—prayer, congregational singing, special music, and the proclamation of the Word—is meant to express our commitment to God and our desire to honor and praise Him.

The Sunday morning service is often the one most frequently attended by both visitors and by regular worshipers. As pastors and ministers, we should be mindful of that fact as we structure the Sunday morning service.

Generally the period of time given to testimonies in an evangelistic service is replaced on Sunday mornings by the reading aloud of a portion of Scripture—often a text that relates to the text of the sermon. Occasionally we may feel led to request a particular personal testimony during this part of the service, so visitors have an opportunity to hear a personal account of salvation.

The special music presented in our Sunday morning services is often more devotional in nature. Anthems on the theme of praise are good, and songs that contain a message of admonition are appropriate as well. Congregational singing should be directed along devotional lines also, as the Spirit leads. Hymns of praise, consecration, worship, and anticipation of the Lord's coming are always proper, but we want to make sure that the songs selected are varied in musical style. Visitors as well as regular worshipers often welcome this opportunity to sing traditional hymns of the faith, though these may be interspersed with Gospel choruses of more recent composition.

The Sunday morning sermon is the time when we instruct the flock, so the focus may be directed to Christians seeking the deeper things of God, rather than to unbelievers. Thus, doctrinal topics such as the foundational spiritual experiences, prayer, consecration, the coming of the Lord, the call of God to service, and divine healing are among the many appropriate subjects to take up at this time. Each congregation should receive a certain amount of instruction on Christian practices, faithfulness, the trial of faith, godly living, and the warfare against Satan and the self-life, so these can also be used as topics. We must lean heavily upon God for direction in what to teach "for the edifying of the body of Christ," as our goal is that we might "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 4:12-13).

[1] In 2 Timothy 1:3, we find an emphasis on worship in the Greek word translated here as *serve*. The word used is *latreuo*, and it appears twenty other times in the New Testament. In each case, it refers to service offered to God as an act of worship. This kind of service is never directed toward other people, but always toward God. We derive our English word *liturgy*, which refers to the order and structure of a Christian worship service, from this Greek word. This is why the Sunday morning service has often been referred to as a "worship" service throughout history.

Evangelistic Services

The majority of Apostolic Faith services around the world are evangelistic in nature. The Great Commission given to the disciples by Jesus specified that they should go and preach the Gospel to every creature.[1] The Apostle Paul instructed the younger minister Timothy to do the work of an evangelist.[2] That challenge applies to ministers of the Gospel in our day as well, and the primary way we fulfill that is to hold Gospel meetings where the emphasis is on the need of every individual to prepare for eternity.

A veteran Apostolic Faith minister and missionary to Africa, George Hughes, wrote this compelling description of the goal of Apostolic Faith church services: "The great aim of all our work, either inside or outside, in our own church buildings or in rented facilities at a neighboring community, is the salvation of souls…For this reason, it is vitally essential that every service we hold is completely successful from start to finish. The songs, selection of music, testimonies, and above all, the sermon, should be so inspiring and inspired that every unbeliever will receive the impetus he needs to start him on his way to God." As ministers, the spirit of evangelism should always be with us—a passion, an unquenchable fire, the underlying motive and compelling force behind every undertaking in the work of the Lord.[3]

The spirit of evangelism must never be missing from our services. The great aim of our evangelistic meetings always should be to present the Gospel that will bring sinners under conviction and ultimately win them for Christ. The songs sung, the testimonies given, and the Word preached, should be with this end in view.

A vital part of our evangelistic services is the time given to personal testimonies—spontaneous accounts given by those whose lives have been changed by the power of God. Typically, Gospel hymns and choruses, sung by the congregation, are interspersed with these testimonies.

The sermon in an evangelistic service should be relatively short and evangelistic in tone, with an earnest appeal to sinners. As ministers, we must keep the sinner and his needs in mind as we pray about and prepare our messages. While many of those in attendance will already be followers of Christ, those in our congregations can still glean spiritual instruction and encouragement from an evangelistic sermon. We must do our best to present the pure Gospel to those who do not know the Lord, and make it absolutely clear to them.

At the close of the sermon, we should always invite the unsaved to come forward and seek the Lord for salvation. We may repeat the invitation between verses of the song, if we feel led to do so. Often this produces good results, as it gives one who is undecided another opportunity to make a choice for God at a crucial moment.

The responsibility for presenting the Gospel message in our evangelistic services rests first upon the ministry, and then upon the workers and people of God. We want to make every effort to communicate in a manner that will convince unbelievers of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come.

[1] Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:1420; Acts 1:8

[2] 2 Timothy 4:5

[3] Romans 10:14-15; 1 Corinthians 1: 17, 21

Sunday School

Since the 1930s, students have met together in Apostolic Faith Sunday school classes around the world to be informed, encouraged, and inspired by studying the Bible. Classes and curriculum are tailored for the needs of students of every age, with an emphasis on the life-changing power in Jesus Christ. In Sunday school, students become familiar with the themes of the Bible, search its pages for answers, share its principles with others, memorize its verses for their lives, and apply its promises in facing their problems.

We have found that there are a number of compelling reasons for operating a Sunday school.

Sunday school provides an open door for evangelism. Parents may never set foot inside our church, but through the open ears, eyes, and hearts of their children, we can reach into their homes and their lives. Over the years, many individuals and even whole families have come into the Gospel through the Sunday school.

Sunday school encourages Bible knowledge. Students receive an overall grasp of the Scriptures that might be difficult for them to obtain otherwise. In a Sunday school class, people can ask questions. When listening to a sermon, if they have a question, they must wait until later to ask it.

Sunday school ministers to all age groups. The particular needs, concerns, and interests of each age group can be addressed in the context of Sunday school. In addition, grouping students by age offers us an opportunity to teach the Word of God at the appropriate level for maximum understanding.

Sunday school produces future workers in the Gospel. The Great Commission not only commissions us to win people, but also to train them to Christian maturity. In Sunday school classes, future workers, teachers, and ministers are instructed in the Word of God, and grounded in the doctrines and practices upheld by the Bible and our organization.

Sunday school provides good role models. Our Sunday school teachers often develop close connections with their students, especially those of a younger age. This connection often makes them positive role models who have a long-time influence in their students' lives.

Sunday school involves individuals in the work of the Lord. Not everyone has musical talents or other abilities that lend themselves to participation in Gospel services. However, the structure of Sunday school offers many options for service in the work of the Lord.

Sunday school offers follow-up for new converts. The Sunday school setting furnishes a nourishing and nurturing environment where new converts can be fed spiritually and encouraged to grow in their Christian lives.

Sunday school establishes a network of friends. People interact with each other in Sunday school. Studies prove that people become rooted in churches where they have friends, and Sunday school classes are a place where such friendships are built and developed.

Sunday school extends the pastors' spiritual care. Our Sunday school teachers have an opportunity to offer individualized interest, instruction, and support that a pastor could not accomplish on his own.

Sunday school brings a sense of vitality to the congregation. The presence of children and young people in a congregation adds vitality and enthusiasm that, when blended with the wisdom and stability of the older ones, makes for a live and vibrant church family.

In our Apostolic Faith churches, the main session is conducted on Sunday, but other Bible-learning sessions are often sponsored or held in conjunction with the Sunday school. These include Vacation Bible Schools, youth camps, Children's church, community events, and other outreaches.[1]

Each local Sunday school is organized into departments and/or classes. These divisions are based on need and number of teachers available, and are designated by age, grade level, or interest (i.e. college groups and

young marrieds) and sometimes gender. At the headquarters church, the Beginners department teaches those of preschool age; the Primary department takes students from the first through the third grades; and the Junior department starts with the fourth grade and includes the seventh grade. Youth classes are held for grades eight through twelve, and the Senior department includes classes for those of collegeage, men's and women's groups, and the senior adult classes.

The actual structure of the Sunday school session is flexible, but we have found that the following pattern works well.

Opening exercises in the main sanctuary:

- Musical prelude
- Congregational singing by all the departments together
- Prayer, usually by a minister or one of the teachers, while the congregation stands
- Announcements
- A special song, instrumental number, or memory verse recitation by student(s)
- Dismissal to classes or departments

Departmental exercises (Beginner through Junior Departments):

- Departmental singing
- Welcome to visitors, acknowledgement of birthdays, etc.
- Class time
- Review or object lesson
- Closing prayer

Competent teachers are necessary for the success of the work, and it is part of our role as pastor to appoint the teachers needed to staff our local Sunday school. A teacher holds a place of sacred responsibility, so teachers in Apostolic Faith Sunday schools must be born-again Christians. Those selected to fill this role should be mature, faithful Christians, since Scripture puts them in the same company as apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors.[2] They should have a clear understanding of the fundamental doctrines and teachings of the Bible, adhere to them, and support them absolutely. They should be able to communicate well, and have appropriate teaching skills or interest in learning them.

Many of our churches have found that regular round table discussions of the lessons, after the teachers have had an opportunity to study the topic privately, are very beneficial as a preparation for teaching. Generally a minister or one of the teachers is appointed as the moderator who leads these sessions. During this session, the objective of the lesson is discussed, key Biblical themes explored, and ideas for visual aids and teaching activities shared between the teachers. This is also a good time for the teachers to plan special programs and discuss departmental activities.

The Bible is the official "textbook" in our Apostolic Faith Sunday schools; we use the King James version in our English-speaking churches. All teaching must be in alignment with the Biblical doctrines and teachings upheld by this organization. Pre-school age classes follow a simple curriculum featuring key Bible stories and basic Biblical concepts such as kindness, obedience, sharing, and loving others. The materials for students of primary school age feature an expanded selection of Bible stories. Middle school through adult curriculum materials alternate between thematic (including Bible character studies) and through-the-Bible textual lessons, with an emphasis on personal application and the life-changing power of Jesus Christ. The various curriculums are all produced at our headquarters and are issued on a quarterly basis. All have accompanying guides with suggestions and instructions for teachers.

In the United States, pastors may request printed copies of curriculum materials for their congregations through our organization website at www.apostolicfaith.org. All materials are also available there for downloading. Churches outside of the United States should connect with their District Superintendent regarding their Sunday school curriculum needs.

One key factor in a vibrant Sunday school is the active and enthusiastic support of the pastor. If that is our role in our local church, we should do all we can to promote Sunday school. Whenever possible, we should take an active part in the actual teaching, and encourage other ministers to do likewise. We need to recognize that this outreach effort, in order to be effective, takes time, money, energy, enthusiasm, and must be demonstrated continually in order for the rest of the workers to feel the same.

Here are some ways we can support our Sunday school outreach and staff.

- Verbalize our support and appreciate for Sunday school.
- Be involved in choosing and training Sunday school teachers.
- Invest time in the lives of our Sunday school teachers. Visit with them, send notes of encouragement, and attend round table sessions when possible.
- Visit the departments occasionally. Greet the children and the teaching staff.
- Encourage some type of promotion for evangelism that inspires students to invite others to Sunday school.
- Reserve time on the church calendar for teacher training.
- Provide a resource library. This will encourage teachers to study, plan together, and make creative teaching materials for their classes.
- If possible, make funds available to provide a cheerful learning environment for the children. Remember that visiting parents will evaluate the quality of our children's program based on their first impression of the children's area.

Our investment in Sunday school will pay dividends in the years to come as young leaders are evangelized, trained, and launched out into the harvest field as a result of what they learned in Sunday school.

[1] See the sections of this manual titled *Vacation Bible School*, *Youth Camps*, and *Children's Church* for more detailed information about these outreaches.

[2] Ephesians 4:11-12

Counsel for Ministers

For more complete instruction regarding the organization, staffing, and administration of Sunday school, or to learn more about the various curriculums currently available from headquarters, contact your District Superintendent. You will also find resources by visiting the Sunday school section of our corporate website at www.apostolicfaith.org.

We use the Sunday school curriculums provided by the Apostolic Faith organization in our Sunday schools, rather than lessons produced by other organizations, since we know our material presents the Bible

doctrines we have upheld since our 1906 founding. We cannot risk diluting our teachings. It is acceptable, for teachers to incorporate visuals, objects, and supplementary materials produced by other organizations into their class presentation, as long as the basic lesson and the materials distributed to the students are produced by the Apostolic Faith.

Those first few moments when a newcomer walks through the door into your Sunday school are vitally important! Negative first impressions are hard to overcome, but positive impressions will also linger in memory. We should encourage our teachers to be sure that visitors are made to feel instantly comfortable and at ease.

Children's Church

The early years of a child's development provide a crucial window of opportunity. This is our best opportunity to impress little ones with the vital truth that Jesus loves them. In these formative years we can establish spiritual foundations that can undergird the rest of our children's lives. Our work with children is something like that of a bricklayer: each time a Biblical truth is presented and understood, another brick is laid in a child's spiritual foundation.

Children's Church has proved to be an effective adjunct to Sunday school in many of our Apostolic Faith churches where there is a sufficient number of children and staff to make it possible. Typically, Children's Church is designed for the youngest members of our congregations—those ages two through twelve or thirteen. Although these services follow the general format of a regular church service with singing, testimonies, music specials, a short sermon, and prayer, visual aids and activities are often included to hold the children's attention. The children are included in the music specials and encouraged to testify. The sermon is presented, at times with an object lesson, and each service ends with an opportunity to pray.

In some of our churches, the youngest children meet with the adults for the first part of a given service (generally Sunday morning) and then are dismissed to their own area for the Children's Church period. In other cases, the Children's Church service is at a completely different time than the scheduled adult services.

A quality Children's Church service must have a solid Gospel message. Every song, object lesson, Scripture passage, and Bible story must present the Gospel in a clear, understandable manner that is appropriate for the developmental level of the little ones in the audience.

To be suitable for Children's Church services, songs used in that setting should have an easy-to-sing or familiar melody, impart a Bible truth, and be varied. Children respond well to visuals that accompany songs. Songs that involve hand motions and other movement give them a chance to expend some energy in an appropriate manner for church. It is important to use songs with words and concepts that children will easily understand. We encourage our children to participate with enthusiasm, yet in keeping with showing respect for God's house.

Often the testimony period in Children's Church consists of giving those who want to an opportunity to speak into the microphone and tell something they are thankful for. Their spontaneous responses to this invitation sometimes amuse the adults present, but they are genuine, sincere—and without a doubt, God loves to hear children express their gratitude for His blessings.

Sermons given in Children's Church must be wrapped in words and methods the child can comprehend. Isaiah 28:10 tells us to teach precept upon precept, line upon line. It is best to keep the message for little ones simple and consider giving it visual impact by using an object or presenting a demonstration. It is important that any visuals used be sufficiently large and shown at a level that every child present can view. Children cannot comprehend abstract concepts, but they can be taught Bible stories and grasp basic principles from the Word of God. Children have simple faith, so as they learn about the Bible, they will believe it is true. In this setting, the sermon length should seldom exceed ten to twelve minutes.

Every Children's Church service should conclude with a time of prayer. It is not enough to observe others praying; children need to experience for themselves the power of prayer. The one giving the message should consider the aim of the message and prepare an invitation to prayer accordingly. It is best to use concrete words to explain why we want the children to pray, explaining that Jesus wants to meet with them, and that we can talk to Him just as we talk to a friend. It is important for the workers present to pray with the children.

Keeping in mind the following principles will help us plan an effective Children's Church service.

Children like to imitate big people. If we put actions to song, they will mimic us. If we talk softly, they will talk softly.

Children enjoy games. Making a game of memorizing a simple Bible verse, or learning a certain Bible principle will help it stick in their minds.

Children learn by doing. The Bible says we are to teach children while we walk, eat, sit, and get up (see Deuteronomy 6:5-7). We can teach them about Jesus and the Bible through activities they can participate in.

Children need to be both active and quiet. Sometimes little ones need to jump and clap and sing. Sometimes they get tired or overly-stimulated, and need to sit and listen to music, or hear a Bible story. There is a place for both as we teach children.

Children learn through repetition. The first time they hear a song, they may just watch. If we repeat the song—or verse, phrase, game, or story—they will join in and love to do it over and over again. Utilize the principle of reinforcement!

Children want to please grown-ups. If we tell little ones when they are being good, they will try to be good again. Sometimes they need encouragement to keep trying!

As we prayerfully invest church resources to nurture faith of the little ones in our congregations, we will help them thrive spiritually—not only in their early years, but also for the rest of their lives.

Youth Services

In the Apostolic Faith Church, we care deeply about the spiritual direction of the young people in our congregations and communities. We recognize our responsibility to point them to salvation, and to encourage and instruct them in their Christian walks. For that reason, we incorporate services designed for youth into our church schedules.

Youth services are conducted and attended by young people. At the headquarters church, spiritually qualified individuals from ages fourteen to thirty-nine years participate.[1] Senior adults are encouraged to attend and support the young workers. The meetings follow the same general pattern as other evangelistic services, but young people make up the choir and orchestra, give the testimonies, and provide the vocal and instrumental special numbers. Members of the young adult ministerial staff lead the service and preach the sermon, which is structured with young people in mind.

In addition to giving young people opportunities to be involved in the church, youth meetings prepare them to serve God in expanded roles in the future. As the young workers shoulder the responsibility of their services, they grow spiritually and develop their talents. Many of our present workers and senior ministers were brought to God while they were still young. They received their training and instruction in the practical school of experience, and the value of these veterans to the work of God clearly demonstrates the importance of young people's work.

Following are some suggestions for youth service leaders.

Eliminate pretense. Speak in real terms and contemporary language. Avoid platitudes—the younger generation sees right through them. Communicate the Gospel to young people in a way that they can understand and engage with. Generalized terms or statements fail to interest them.

Use the right kind of music. Choose songs with a positive, substantive message and energetic melody. There are many praise songs and even some hymns that lend themselves to a more youth-oriented sound. Learn new songs regularly, but perhaps not more than one in a service. You may wish to occasionally add variety by using song sheets or projected visuals.

Relax! Learn not to show nervousness—it draws attention to the minister rather than the One the congregation came to worship. And *smile!* Looking somber will dampen the mood of the service.

Be yourself. If the leader comes off as different from the person he is known to be out-of-the pulpit, it puts people off. Even if they do not say it, they may wonder who you are trying to impress.

Incorporate variety. Young people readily accept change. In fact, some variation in the exact structure of a service keeps it fresh and interesting. If the Spirit appears to be moving in a different direction, go with it, provided doing so does not distract from the spirit and purpose of the meeting.

Be relevant. Remember, the sermon is directed to young people. Make sure messages are not only theologically sound, but also culturally relevant and developmentally appropriate for the ages represented in your youth group.

As ministers and pastors, there are several steps we can take to encourage and develop youth leaders and the young people of our churches.

- *Invest in them.* Commit to instructing young workers. Be proactive in mentoring, nurturing, and encouraging their personal and spiritual development.
- *Listen carefully.* Be available and accessible. Pay attention not only to their words, but also to what lies behind their words.

- *Offer support.* Make resources, time, and funding available for youth projects and ministries when possible.
- *Involve them.* Make sure they have opportunities to participate in the work of the Lord if they are spiritually qualified. Be open to their input on decisions that affect the youth ministry and efforts.
- *Respect their time*. Plan ahead and do not overwhelm them with too many responsibilities all at once. Remember, they have other commitments too.
- *Appreciate them.* Let them know that you appreciate the young people as a vital force of the church *now*, not just in the future.
- *Set a good example.* Model what it means to be an involved, enthusiastic, participant in the work of the Lord.

As ministers, we want to remember that we have only a few years with the young people to solidly ground them in the doctrines and teachings of the Bible before they move into their adult years and are less open to holy impressions. If a child or young person remains away from Christ, every year he becomes farther and farther away. For that reason, perhaps no outreach of the church is more urgent in nature.

[1] This age range is flexible, and changes occasionally. In other localities, it will need to be adjusted based on the size of the congregation. See the section titled *Children's Church* in this manual for more information about services for younger children.

Holiday and Special Occasion Services

Holiday services and special programs are an effective way to reach into our communities. Even individuals who do not normally attend church often are receptive to an invitation to attend events during principal Christian holidays and seasons of the year.

Commemorative celebrations appear to have been a part of Christianity since the third or fourth century, with Easter being the oldest holiday. Early Christians encouraged the observance of holidays as a way to be reminded of important spiritual matters. They emphasized that Christian observances should be very unlike those of pagans. They were to be characterized by solemnity and decorum, with a focus on the worship of God, and were thus in sharp contrast to the riotous and ungodly behavior at typical pagan celebrations.

Traditional Christian holidays include Christmas, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter, which commemorate significant events in Christian history. Thanksgiving, which originated in the United States as a day to express gratitude for God's provision, also can be a time of special celebration in the church. Services on other national holidays such as Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and Independence Day can highlight the blessings of God, such as freedom of worship, and honor those who have served our country. Mother's and Father's Day services can be structured to encourage parents, and to especially honor Christian fathers and mothers.

From time to time, significant national events may also lend themselves to special services. A day of national celebration at the end of a major hostility, of mourning at a time of national calamity, or a day designated by our government (such as the National Day of Prayer) might be times when a special church service would be appropriate. As pastors, we can consult with our District Superintendent or other pastors if we have questions about the timing or structure of such a service.

Following are suggestions regarding special services at specific holiday times.

Christmas

Christmas offers great potential for evangelistic outreach by churches both large and small. Special church events and programs contribute much toward making this a meaningful time for congregations and communities. They provide an opportunity to focus individuals on the true meaning of Christmas, to invite visitors to share the season with us, and also to unite the congregation as members work on shared projects.

Sunday school Christmas programs. If our local church has a Sunday school, Christmas programs are a particularly effective outreach. Parents will not want to miss an opportunity to see their little ones perform. Sunday school programs provide an opportunity for children and young people to use their musical talents, and should be structured so that all the children have a part, either in solos, recitations, or in songs by the entire group. The children will enjoy participating, but adults will enjoy watching it too. Our goal should be to deliver the message of Jesus' birth in a manner that both children and adults will find appealing and understandable.

The type and implementation of our Sunday school Christmas programs will depend on the resources available and the ages of the children with whom we are working. While many options for effective Christmas pageants exist, a portrayal of the Nativity adapts itself easily to a smaller congregation. The focus can be on Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus, or can be expanded to include angels, shepherds, and wise men, depending upon the size of our group. One of the beautiful aspects of the Nativity account is that it can be understood at many levels. Children simply delight in the story, while teens and adults can be pointed toward thinking more deeply about how Jesus' birth impacts their lives.

As plans are made, remember that people enjoy being involved. Even if the older members of your congregation are not participating directly, they can make scenery, create costumes, prepare programs, make treats, greet visitors. . . the opportunities are wide-ranging!

Caroling. One effective seasonal outreach for a congregation of any size is caroling in the church vicinity or at a nursing facility or hospital. Printed song sheets of the lyrics will encourage listeners to join in. (Do make sure that any song sheets are in accordance with copyright restrictions.) We may also want to hand out invitations to our church, as well as a small tract or message about the true meaning of the season.

Concerts, cantatas, or other musical presentations. Since music is such an integral part of the Christmas season, programs featuring the music, themes, and beautiful traditional carols of Christmas have proven to be a successful way of drawing visitors to the church during this time of year. In churches where an orchestra and choir are available, Christmas concerts are always enjoyed. Smaller churches may have more limited resources, but people enjoy even a simple gathering to sing the familiar Christmas carols, perhaps interspersed with a reading of Scripture passages or narrations relating the story of the Nativity.

Candlelight Service. In the midst of widespread focus on secular seasonal activities in our communities, many churches still have candlelight services to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child. These are generally held at night, and are a setting in which groups of people, large or small, can sing or listen to Christmas songs, hear Bible passages describing the birth of Jesus, quietly reflect, and pray together. Usually the lighting in the sanctuary is dim, so the candles will have the most impact. In some churches, candles are held by those in attendance, though this requires great care in terms of fire safety, and must be subject to local fire department approval. (If small children will be in attendance, you may wish to consider using battery-powered candles.) Alternatively, candles may simply be used to decorate the sanctuary, or the choir presenting special music could hold them.

Palm Sunday

As Holy Week begins, many of our churches have special services on Palm Sunday. As Jesus returned to Jerusalem just prior to His crucifixion, the people cried out "Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest" (Matthew 21:9) and laid palm branches down in front of Him. The service commemorating this event generally focuses on both His triumphant entry and the shadow of the cross. Special music often includes anthems of praise and songs which joyously honor Jesus the King. Congregational songs, the Scripture read, and the sermon are carefully chosen and structured to reinforce Palm Sunday's bittersweet themes and messages.

Good Friday

The death of Jesus Christ is commemorated on the Friday just before Easter. Through His death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus paid the penalty for our sins, so many of our Apostolic Faith Church services hold special services on Good Friday, focusing on the suffering and death of our Savior. While these services may not be attended by many outside of our own church families, they are a special time of remembering what Christ endured to purchase our salvation. Often the usual testimony period is given over to special music that focuses on the cross, and reading of the Scriptures telling of the events surrounding Jesus' death.

Easter

Easter, which commemorates Christ's resurrection on the third day after His crucifixion, can rightly be regarded as the central day in the entire Christian calendar. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Early Church members in Corinth, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins (1 Corinthians 15:17). The resurrection accounts by Christ's disciples are read every Easter Sunday in Christian churches around the world. In early Christian history, celebrations of Easter were tied to Jewish celebrations of Passover. For Jews, Passover is a celebration of deliverance from bondage in Egypt; for Christians, Easter is a celebration of deliverance from sin and death.

Traditionally, many people who rarely attend church come to Easter Sunday services. For that reason, Easter services are always a part of Apostolic Faith Church schedules. Easter services typically feature triumphant Easter music, and congregational hymns continue the theme of Christ's victory over death.

Often, Scripture readings and narrations are woven together with the music. Occasionally, our churches may present a Resurrection cantata or musical which combines musical numbers and drama or projected visuals to trace the way in which Christ's redemptive sacrifice brought hope to humanity. The sermon should focus on the Easter story, and should be clear and passionate, keeping in mind that many present are in church only infrequently.

While doing our best to create programs that are memorable, care must be taken to keep a balance between performance and presenting a clear account of the resurrection and what it means to us. The service should be done with excellence, but it is the Gospel message that matters.

Thanksgiving

Grateful Pilgrims declared a three-day feast of thanksgiving, starting on December 13, 1621, to express their gratitude for God's providence and the bountiful harvest He had blessed them with that summer. This was America's first Thanksgiving festival. In 1789, following a proclamation issued by President George Washington, America celebrated its first Day of Thanksgiving to God under its new constitution. Thanksgiving Day was permanently established as a national holiday in 1941.

God has blessed our nation and our personal lives, and we encourage our congregation members to keep an "attitude of gratitude" on Thanksgiving Day and every day. At times, Apostolic Faith churches hold services on Thanksgiving Day itself, which is on the fourth Thursday of November. However, more typically, the Sunday morning service before Thanksgiving is especially centered on expressions of gratitude for what God has done. In these services, we offer thanks to God for temporal blessings—for liberty, for shelter and food, for family and health. But we also recognize that many live without those benefits, so the praises we offer God include gratitude for the blessings which are not measured by this world's values. No matter what our circumstances, we are grateful for God's forgiveness, for the gift of eternal life, and for an eternal home that is being prepared for us in Heaven.

Mother's Day and Father's Day

On May 9, 1914, United States President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day, establishing it as a time for "public expression of our love and reverence for the mothers of our country." While Mother's Day is not a religious holiday, many of our Apostolic Faith churches use that opportunity to recognize and affirm the tremendous influence mothers have in the lives of their family. Songs in these services usually focus on the Christian home and the importance of godly parental examples. If the church budget permits, it is a thoughtful touch to present a single flower or small gift to mothers in attendance. Some of our churches also have great-grandmothers, grandmothers, and then mothers stand to be acknowledged. Special mention may be made of those who have become new mothers or mothers again during the past year. At times, we may feature the testimony of a mother in the local church, or of someone who was greatly influenced by a Christian mother. The message of the service should be designed to encourage and affirm godly mothers.

In 1972 President Richard M. Nixon established a national Father's Day to be observed annually on the third Sunday in June. However, the first Father's Day observance was actually held on July 5, 1908, at Fairmont, West Virginia, in recognition of 210 fathers who had lost their lives in a mining accident just a few months earlier. In our Father's Day services, we recognize the vital role fathers play in God's plan for the family. Songs chosen often challenge the men of the church to recommit themselves to being loving leaders of those in their care, as well as dedicated doers of the Word of God.

National Holidays

Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and Independence Day are national holidays in the United States that remind us of the privileges, resources, and freedoms we share and should never take for granted. Of the three,

Veterans Day and Independence Day occasionally fall on a Sunday, and those Sundays are especially appropriate times for some sort of patriotic observance in our church services. National holidays—and not just the United States holidays, but the national holidays of every nation—bring out our deepest feelings of gratitude and love for our countries. However, services are not just expressions of patriotism or opportunities for flag-waving; they are also occasions for reflection and prayer for our nation.

Our purpose in holding services on holidays and other special occasions is always to glorify God and to avail ourselves of every opportunity to bring men and women to Him. Times of celebration can provide excellent opportunities to present the Gospel, and we should do our best to follow the leading of the Lord to determine when and how to use holiday services as a form of outreach.

Counsel to Ministers

A wide spectrum of family and cultural traditions surround calendar holidays. As a church, we do not dictate how holidays should be celebrated within the family. However, particularly in homes with young children, we recommend that parents carefully consider the effect that family customs have upon impressionable children. Biblical principles must be applied to all holiday observances, and emphasis put upon the spiritual aspects of traditional Christian holidays whenever possible.

Over the years, Christmas has become an increasingly secular event in our society, with a mixture of religious and folk customs and traditions. We should encourage parents in our congregations to emphasize to their children the spiritual nature of this holiday, to counteract the attempts of secular society to replace the religious significance with neutral or even non-Christian symbols and customs.

In the Apostolic Faith organization, we do not normally observe the traditional rituals of Lent, which occurs on the forty days prior to Easter. Churches that observe Lent make it a time of fasting, doing penance, and abstaining from worldly amusements in preparation for Easter. While we obviously support appropriate fasting, repenting from sin, and abstaining from ungodly activities, we teach that self-denial and holy living should be a lifestyle rather than just something we do once a year.

Some in our congregations may question the advisability of Christian families adopting secular traditions surrounding the Easter holiday. We counsel Christian parents to make sure they instruct their little ones in the true meaning of Easter, and emphasis in the church setting always should be placed on the Resurrection and what it means for our salvation.

While expressing appreciation for mothers, especially Christian mothers, is appropriate, we should take care that our church celebrations on Mother's Day do not cause pain for women dealing with fertility issues, or for mothers who have lost children. Some of our churches have chosen to make Mother's Day Sunday a time to honor the women of the church, in addition to those who have children. However, we must do so in a manner that avoids drawing attention to their circumstances as much as possible.

The symbolism and practices that are part of the American holiday of Halloween concern many Christian parents. While harvest-related symbols such as pumpkins and leaves are harmless, a focus on witches, goblins, and ghosts of departed persons is problematic. And any practices related to the occult, or depictions of evil monsters, devils, and other characters associated with satanic influences should never be allowed in Christian social activities. Therefore, we do not celebrate Halloween in a church setting.

Concerts

When there are a sufficient number of trained musicians in one of our Apostolic Faith churches to present a concert, such programs have been an effectual means of bringing people into contact with the Gospel. An interest in music is one of the marks of contemporary culture, and the ease with which it is possible to listen to music via electronic media has in no way diminished the enjoyment of attending live concerts. Musical events give those in our congregations a logical reason to invite their friends who have other church connections; they are also an excellent way to appeal to people who do not ordinarily go to church but who appreciate good music. And while the concert itself is the attraction, attendees also have an opportunity to learn about the Apostolic Faith work and feel the Spirit of God in our midst.

Following are guidelines for presenting a concert in an Apostolic Faith Church.

Choose musical selections carefully. A key factor in ensuring that all of our musical programs can be blessed by the Spirit of God is the selection of pieces appropriate for a church setting. Vocal numbers are generally sacred in nature; instrumental numbers drawn from the classics can be suitable in programs of this type. In addition, cultural music can be appropriate. In keeping with the conservative nature of our organization, there is no showmanship on the part of those who perform. Honoring God and bringing glory to Him is the goal of our musicians, rather than drawing attention to their personal talents.

Advertise effectively. It may be beneficial to print up fliers with information about the upcoming concert and post them a couple of weeks in advance in local supermarkets, community centers, libraries, and/or shopping malls. Additionally, consider contacting your local media outlets in order to have your event advertised in the community. You may be able to arrange for public service announcements (PSAs) to be broadcast in the days leading up to your concert. A brief summary of the program, highlighting numbers that will be familiar to many concert-goers, can be a draw. It is also advisable to state that the event is free and that no collections will be taken.

Offer programs. Printed programs convey an impression that the concert is a quality event. Along with a list of the titles to be performed, programs may offer the words of the song, information about the theme, style, or background of the piece, and the name of the composer. It is a good policy to reserve one page of the program for an invitation and service schedule of the local church, since we want to make sure that concert attendees know they are welcome to return for regular church services. Make sure that your program is carefully proofed before printing, and that all of the information is correct.

Have ushers available. Ushers play an important role in making visitors comfortable and making sure their needs are met. They should be available to distribute programs, answer questions, offer assistance, and generally make sure that everyone enters and exits the sanctuary in a safe and timely manner. Those who have this responsibility should be instructed to wait to seat late comers until the interval between numbers, when attendees can be directed to a seat without distracting from the performance. In the event of an emergency, ushers should be trained to help concert-goers move calmly and quickly toward the exits.

Make sure guests are welcomed and invited to return. Often in our concerts the pastor comes forward after the opening number to welcome visitors and make announcements. After the close of the last number, the pastor may choose to voice the appreciation of the audience for the music and singing. If a closing prayer is how the concert is scheduled to end, the pastor may call upon another minister to give a benediction, or do so personally. The tone of the number at the end of the program will suggest whether or not a formal dismissal benediction is the appropriate conclusion.

Permit applause. It is customary for concert audiences to express their appreciation by applause, and this is permitted in our church concerts except when doing so would distract from the sacred message of a particular number. In such cases, the pastor should request prior to the performance that the audience hold their applause.

Invite audience participation. Under certain circumstances, audience participation is appropriate. For example, at some concerts the entire audience joins in singing the national anthem. In an Easter concert, the final number may be a Gospel anthem that proclaims the joyful news of the Resurrection, and the audience could be invited to join in a verse or two. In such cases, it is helpful to print the verse(s) in which the audience will participate on the program.

While concerts are a means of interesting visitors in our church, the musicians who work together on a concert also benefit. Practicing for a special event builds musicianship. When working on the repertoire for a concert, musicians concentrate on a piece of music over a period of weeks, adding polish and nuance to their performances. Choir members not only learn the music, but they also have time to pay attention to details such as mood, tone, balance, melodic shape, vowel production, and breathing. Orchestra members can perfect complicated passages and refine their united efforts more extensively than when the focus is on getting ready for each Sunday's services. The heightened inspiration and concentration that precede a concert enable the choir and orchestra to achieve a heightened level of performance.

Outreach Services

Those who are committed to the Gospel of Christ look for opportunities and ways to share it with others. In the Apostolic Faith work, many types of outreach services have been held over the years to present the message of truth to groups of people unable to attend services at the church. Not only are these endeavors a blessing to those who attend, but they also bind the workers together in fellowship and their common goal of spreading the Gospel.

These outreach efforts will not be practicable in every location, but where circumstances allow, they can be effective means of reaching souls for Christ.

Services in Retirement Homes or Assisted Living Facilities

Outreach work in retirement homes or assisted living centers includes facilities where public services can be held, as well as those where personal visitation is the only means of connecting with the residents.

When a facility is open only to personal visitation, special singers may sometimes be taken to sing in individual rooms if the management of the home approves. Workers who visit the residents should take along a sampling of Gospel literature and offer it to those who are interested. Authorization to hold regular services is often preceded by a period of time when only personal visitation is possible. Workers visiting the homes should be encouraged to watch for an interest on the part of the management to schedule a service for any who wish to attend. Arrangements can then be made by the pastor or by someone he appoints.

Services in retirement homes or assisted living centers are generally held in a common meeting area or dining room where residents can gather. The service should be structured in a somewhat informal manner, since attendants in the home may be bringing residents in and out as the service progresses. They should consist primarily of testimonies, special songs, and a brief message.

Residents in these places particularly enjoy music, and may appreciate the opportunity to sing along on some of the old Gospel hymns. It is best if even the special songs are familiar. Prayer by a minister or worker should always be included in the services. The sermon should be comforting and reassuring in nature, but should also lead those who listen to an understanding of the importance of making sure that they have a connection with God and are assured of where they will spend eternity.

During the holiday season especially, retirement homes and assisted living centers often welcome groups of musicians who are willing to provide a program of special seasonal music for the residents. Offering to present a program of this nature may result in additional open doors for services in the facility.

The work among the sick, aged, and infirm has been a fruitful one for the Kingdom, and every effort must be made to bring the Gospel to those who will soon step into eternity.

Mission Meetings

Mission meetings are one way that a number of our Apostolic Faith churches reach out to the homeless, troubled, and needy in their local communities. We know that redemption and transformation are possible for every individual. The message of hope through Jesus Christ, when acted upon in repentance and belief, impacts every aspect of life—physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual—and that is the theme which we do our best to communicate when holding mission meetings.

Like most of our regular services, mission meetings should incorporate music, Spirit-anointed testimonies of God's power to deliver, and an evangelistic message appropriate to the individuals who attend.

A few simple guidelines will equip ministers and workers to truly help the troubled people present in such services.

Understand that holding a meeting is a privilege. Follow the instructions of the staff at the mission. Be sure to begin and end services at the appointed times. If it is necessary to cancel a meeting for any reason, we should let those in charge at the mission know about the cancellation as soon as possible.

Never give cash to those who attend the meetings. Even when hard-luck stories are true, well-intended gifts can be readily converted to drugs or alcohol. Often, the local mission provides meals or connects the individuals with resources where those needs can be met, so if needs are expressed to workers, we should convey them to the mission staff.

Talk with respect to the individuals who attend. Communicating with a homeless or troubled person in a friendly, respectful manner not only shows the love of God, but it can give that person a sense of civility and dignity. Genuine friendliness breaks down barriers and opens hearts to the message we bring.

Recognize that the problems facing these individuals vary. Street people are as diverse as the colors of a rainbow. Not all of the people who attend a meeting are convicted felons or drug addicts. The person we converse with may be a battered woman, a disabled veteran, or someone who simply is lacking the job skills necessary to find employment.

Avoid any kind of argument or altercation. We should never take it upon ourselves to chastise individuals who attend the services. If a disturbance occurs during a mission meeting, it is best to simply ignore it and/or let the mission staff deal with it. Remember, those present will be watching us, and we must ensure that our conduct does not undermine the effectiveness of our efforts for God.

Pray for those who attend. God can use your prayers to bring broken lives to Himself. Often our mission meetings include a time when those who attend can share their personal prayer requests. Be faithful in bringing these needs—and the individuals who expressed them—before the Lord in prayer.

Take precautions regarding safety. Some of those we encounter in mission meetings may be ex-offenders or individuals running from the law. Always be prudent while talking with those who attend. Stay in areas where other people can see you, and do not take unnecessary chances. Travel to and from the meetings together with other workers if at all possible.

Services in Correctional Facilities and Penitentiaries

The Apostolic Faith organization has held services in correctional facilities since 1907, at times contacting over 500 inmates in one day. While permission to conduct services is not always as easily obtained as it was in years past, when the opportunity exists, we have found it an effective way to reach out to individuals in need of a Savior.

Generally, services in correctional institutions are under the supervision of the facility chaplain. The application process, along with the clearance procedures for those who will be involved, varies from institution to institution and from state to state. In the United States, contact information for detention facilities can usually be found by looking online for the state's Department of Corrections website.

Once permission has been granted to hold services and a time slot allotted, it is our responsibility as pastor or minister in charge to be certain that workers scrupulously comply with official regulations regarding those who enter the facility, and the conducting of meetings. Information regarding regulations pertaining to visitors can be found online. It is advisable to check the dress code for visitors and make workers aware of the requirements, as there may be restrictions regarding the color and types of clothing that can be worn.

Certain other rules apply to all correctional facilities and must be observed by our workers and leaders even though they are not mentioned specifically by the officials at an institution being entered for the first time. Workers should be cautioned that they must have no communication or conversation with the offenders unless it is cleared through official channels and meets with the approval of the officers in charge. Taking letters, notes, or any other material in or out of the prison at the request of an inmate is strictly prohibited.

Distribution of our tracts and papers must be authorized by the facility. In some cases, the procedure would be to give a supply to the prison chaplain and allow him to distribute it once the material has been cleared. In other cases, our workers may be allowed to bring it in and make a supply available to those who are interested. Whatever the case, in each service we should let those attending the service know that free literature is available through our organization, and encourage them to write to the headquarters office with a request to receive it through the mail.

Generally, services in detainment facilities will be conducted much like our other Gospel services. Selected groups who visit these institutions include a minister, musicians, and other Christian workers. Each service is a musical program interspersed with personal testimonies telling of the deliverance the workers found when they surrendered their lives to God.

If it is possible for the offenders to join in the congregational singing they should be encouraged to do so. Books or song sheets can be taken for their use, if that is permitted at the prison, and it is also good to allow inmates to suggest songs of their own choosing. If workers can bring instruments into the facility, instrumental accompaniment or special numbers adds a great deal to the service.

The service ends with a brief, evangelistic message from the Word of God, and then those attending may be given an opportunity to share prayer requests. These are brought to the church members at the next regular service. When prison routine requires the prisoners to leave the auditorium before the workers do, the musicians may play a hymn, or a group of singers may sing an appropriate number as they leave.

Interference or disruption by inmates at any point in the service is usually taken care of by the prison officials in charge. Ministers and workers should immediately comply with any instruction given by prison administrators.

Through the years, prison outreach efforts have been rewarding. Men and women have been saved and truly delivered from evil habits and sinful behaviors that had them bound for years. On several occasions, the message of hope brought to men behind bars resulted in the conversion of notorious offenders, even some who were awaiting execution. While on death row, they were truly converted and wrote wonderful letters telling of the transformation in their lives.

Juvenile Home Services

Workers from Apostolic Faith churches also hold services similar to the ones held in the adult detention facilities at juvenile correctional institutions. At the Portland headquarters, groups of two to four adults hold informal group Bible discussions each month with youths ranging in age from nine to seventeen. Sometimes several meetings are held at each visit, reaching many young people at a time. Topics ranging from God's love to the Great Tribulation are discussed. Often, one or two of the young people want some one-on-one talk time, or indicate their desire to pray. The session is closed with prayer, but before workers leave, tracts and Gospel magazines are distributed to those who are interested. Most of these troubled young people ask to be remembered in prayer.

Church Dedication Services

The establishment of a church building is an important event in a church's history. When Apostolic Faith congregations purchase a building or complete the construction of a new church, they traditionally plan a dedication service.

Scripture establishes a precedent for dedication of a church building. When the tabernacle in the wilderness was completed, God commanded Moses to anoint the altar and all its vessels. We read, "And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy" (Exodus 30:29). Moses did according to God's instructions—he sanctified them, or set them apart—and that is what we do when we hold a church dedication service. In 1 Kings 8, we read of the dedication of Solomon's Temple, and how the glory of the Lord filled the place in such a manner that the priests could no longer minister before the altar. Solomon blessed the whole assembly of Israel at that time, and acknowledged God's faithfulness in the completion of the house built for Him.

The dedication of a church sanctuary for the worship of God is a special occasion and requires wise planning and careful preparation. A special dedicatory service is a way to document and preserve a record of this unique event.

It will be important to establish the date of your dedication service as soon as it is practicable to do so. Communicate with the Superintendent General or your District Superintendent regarding a suitable date, as you will want to avoid a conflict with other scheduled events or series of meetings in the Apostolic Faith work.

Printed invitations are appropriate for an occasion of this nature. These may be mailed out to the surrounding community, local officials, and individuals who have had a connection with the Apostolic Faith Church. If a church has been newly built, the tradespeople and building supply companies who were involved with the project will be interested in the event. Those in the neighborhood of the church should be notified as well. Many will respond to an invitation to attend the dedication service, as it is a community event as well as a time for celebration and thanksgiving on the part of those who will make the new building their church home.

The service typically begins with a musical anthem or fanfare as a prelude. Opening remarks by the pastor should include a welcome to visitors, and a brief summary of what has led up to dedication day. At some point in the service, it is a polite gesture to introduce the key people who helped in construction of the building and express appreciation for their efforts. It is also appropriate to recognize everyone who participated in any part of the project by asking them to stand while the congregation applauds.

A church dedication is a time when the congregation reflects on its history, so the service may include a timeline of events leading up to the special day, a description of significant dates in the construction project, photos, and comments by key individuals in the church.

Services of this nature are usually filled with expressions of worship and thankfulness. Music and singing should play a significant part in a dedication service, since this is a time of rejoicing and praise to God for His blessings. We would typically select hymns and choruses with dedication, new beginning, or consecration themes.

The Scripture reading or sermon text should be on a subject appropriate to the event. Portions of 1 Kings 8, and 2 Chronicles 6 and 7 are good choices. Other suitable verses may be selected from Ezra 6; Psalms 26, 27, 84; and Matthew 16:13-20. The sermon can be on the subject of personal consecration and dedication, the needs of the world and our purpose to fill those needs wherever possible, a call to evangelism and zeal for God, or other subjects in keeping with the particular event, as led by the Spirit of God. Dedication sermons are brief and not as long as regular service sermons.

The message is typically followed by the dedicatory prayer, which should consecrate the new facility for God's service, ask for His presence to dwell in the sanctuary being dedicated to Him, and invoke His blessing on those who will attend there. We should acknowledge His faithfulness and provision, and ask for the Spirit of God to rest upon all that happens within the church's doors.

As a rule, there is no altar service at the conclusion of a dedication service. Following the formal event, visitors may be invited to tour the building. Often, refreshments are served if there is a suitable space in the new facility that makes this possible. This gives the congregation an opportunity to greet visitors and express appreciation to those who participated in the construction project. It is a time of rejoicing and fellowship and an opportunity to foster a sense of community with those who live in the neighborhood.

Following is a sample order of service for a church dedication.

- Orchestra and Choral Prelude
- Welcome
- Congregational Hymn of Dedication
- Prayer
- Choral Anthem of Dedication
- Acknowledgments
- Instrumental or Vocal Solo
- Scripture Reading
- Choral Selection
- Sermon
- Dedicatory Prayer
- Final Orchestra and Choir Number or Congregational Song

Church Anniversary Services

When a church reaches a significant milestone in its history, such as its twenty-fifth, fiftieth, or seventy-fifth year of existence, it is appropriate to plan a special commemorative service recognizing that event. As with a church dedication, this is a celebratory occasion, and a time that is especially meaningful to the church family.

As you and your congregation members plan and prepare for this event, there are several steps you can take at various stages in the process to make your anniversary successful and meaningful for all who attend.

As you begin planning:

Establish the date well in advance of the event itself. Pastors should confer with the Superintendent General or their District Superintendent to set a date that will not conflict with other church events in neighboring branch churches.

Decide on the nature and scope of your celebration. Will it be a one-time event, or is this an opportunity to have a weekend of special meetings, or other activities in conjunction with the main anniversary service? Will it be for the church family only, or will all events be open to the general public? As you plan the activities for the observance**,** you may want to consider such options as a church open house, a pageant depicting historical events from the history of the church, a fellowship dinner or reception to honor special guests from the church's past, a multi-media production featuring photos and video clips from church history, or a reenactment of early services in the church.

Compile a history of your church since its inception. Organize the historical material you have available in your church records, and track down information to fill any gaps in the timeline. You may be able to get information from the archives at the headquarters church in Portland or your District headquarters. Consider preparing a brochure or booklet with the history of the church to distribute during the anniversary observance.

Establish a church archive. Gather significant artifacts from members of your congregation. An anniversary year is a good time to make sure that the church has a complete record of all former pastors and their dates of tenure, along with collection of all past newsletters, invitations, programs, directories, and similar materials on file and safely stored away. You may wish to start or continue a church scrapbook. Gather news clippings, photos, letters from members, and other memorabilia.

Start an oral history project with older members of the congregation. Talk to them individually and collectively about what they remember most about the church, events in its history, and congregation members. Be aware that when two or more members get together, they often are catalysts for one another, since one memory triggers another. Record your sessions so their accounts are preserved.

Shortly before the event:

Put together the service program. Generally, an anniversary service follows a similar format to a church dedication service. It should include special music with the theme of thanksgiving and praise, a welcome to visitors, recognition of former pastors and those who have participated in the work through the years, and a brief message. As with a church dedication service, the sermon can focus on personal consecration, the needs of the world and our purpose to fill those needs wherever possible, a call to evangelism and zeal for God, or other subjects in keeping with the particular event. The service should close with prayer.

Consider producing a printed invitation. These could be mailed out to all members**,** present and former, informing them of the upcoming celebration and inviting them to attend. You should also send the invitation to the headquarters church in Portland or your District Headquarters, as well as any other nearby Apostolic Faith Churches. You may also wish to invite neighbors who live in the vicinity of the church.

Create a portrait gallery with good, portrait-quality photographs of all pastors and/or ministers who have served the congregation. Have this displayed on a board or wall of your church entryway during the celebration.

Appoint an official photographer, perhaps a member of the church, to take photos during all the events, especially on the day of the main event. Consider having an official portrait made of all present, or of all former pastors and spouses who attend.

Arrange for videotaping of the event. Many members of the church may own camcorders and will probably shoot some film at some point. If your budget allows, you may wish to hire a professional to video on the day of the main event. Make sure to have your videographer shoot the invitation, brochures, signage, etc. so it can be included in the photo record. Have a studio combine the professional footage with scanned images from your archives to make into an "official" celebration video for members to purchase.

Immediately prior to the event:

Hold a work day to tidy up the church yard, plant flowers and shrubs, wash windows or pressure wash the church, clean out the basement and attic (you might find something interesting!), paint areas that need freshening up, etc. Appoint someone to identify projects ahead of time so needed supplies can be purchased in advance. You'll want the building(s) to look their best for the celebration.

Put up a sign or banner announcing your anniversary celebration date and time in front of the church. It will tell your neighbors that something exciting is happening at the church.

Following the event:

Supply audio and video recordings of the celebration to shut-ins and former members who cannot return for the celebration so that they can share the special time.

Save copies of everything produced during the anniversary celebration. File in boxes or cabinets as your church Anniversary Celebration Collection. Include any mementos ordered, newspaper clippings, invitations and announcements, photographs and negatives, posters, flyers, videos, newsletter accounts, everything.

Thank individuals who participated. While the praise and glory goes to God for His blessing through the years, it is a thoughtful gesture to send a note of thanks to former pastors who traveled a significant distance to participate, or to those in your own church congregation who carried the load of organizing the anniversary celebration.

Church anniversaries are exciting times. They encourage congregation members to look back and acknowledge God's blessings and to look forward in anticipation of God's continued presence in your midst. When properly done, an anniversary can be a bonding experience for your congregation, and can have many lasting benefits.

Bible Teaching Services

Bible Teaching services are a part of Apostolic Faith camp meetings held around the world. In these services, the ministers who bring the Word of God focus on vital doctrinal topics, with the objective of ensuring that the people who make the Apostolic Faith their church home are fully grounded in the truths of God's Word.

Bible doctrine is the foundation of our Christian lives and ministry. The Apostle Luke recorded that Early Church members "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42). The Apostle Paul indicated that one of the marks of spiritual maturity among believers was that they were not "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14). That type of stability is built in part upon careful and comprehensive spiritual instruction.

The English word *doctrine* is derived from a Latin term which means "teaching." Part of our responsibility as pastors and ministers is to teach "the things which become sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). When we teach doctrine, we follow the example of Christ himself. As the Master Teacher and our teaching model, Jesus told those who followed Him, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me" (John 7:16). When Jesus concluded His Sermon on the Mount, we read that "the people were astonished at His doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matthew 7:28-29).

When we study and teach doctrine, we are studying and teaching the Word of God on some topic or theme. Doctrinal teaching is not an expression of our own thoughts on a subject. Rather, our purpose must be to communicate what the Bible teaches about the topic as accurately as possible. The Scriptures are our source in both the study and teaching of doctrine.

The structure of a camp meeting Bible Teaching service is much the same as that of an evangelistic service, including a musical prelude, congregational singing, prayer, and personal testimonies interspersed with special numbers by soloists or vocal ensembles. The Bible teaching message is generally a bit longer than a typical evangelistic message, and is built on a series of Bible texts concerning the doctrinal point being studied. The congregation is encouraged to follow the reading of each reference in their own Bibles, the teacher indicating the Scriptures before reading each passage, allowing those in the audience sufficient time to locate the verses. An altar service follows the Bible Teaching.

Every minister should qualify himself by personal study and prayer to teach the doctrines of the Bible. Giving an effective Bible Teaching requires thorough preparation. As with every sermon, we must begin by seeking the mind of the Lord regarding the topic to be considered. Many of the subsequent steps we take to prepare are similar to those we take in preparation for any sermon, but some differences exist.[1]

In a typical evangelistic sermon, our message will be built around one text, with supporting Scriptures. When a potential subject is laid on our hearts for a Bible Teaching, we will need to find and study a range of Biblical passages that relate to that topic. This can be done by searching a concordance for key words. We may also find it helpful to consult a good topical Bible under the heading of the doctrinal point we are considering. Many study Bibles include cross-references designed to lead the reader through a study of Biblical topics; these can be another good source to compile our list.

Careful study of the verses we find related to our topic will help us formulate key points that will make up the basic structure of our Bible Teaching. Our next step will be to select the clearest and strongest verses to substantiate these points, avoiding verses that might tend to distract from the intended topic. We should also delete references that are the same material in different forms, texts that must be interpreted or "stretched" to adapt to the point, verses not suited to the needs or understanding of the congregation for which we are preparing, and any verses that we are uncertain about with regards to their message. We must resist the urge to present everything we find on the subject—more is not always better.

Our Bible Teaching will be more cohesive and easier for the congregation to follow if we seek connected lines of thought. We should attempt to bring together points that naturally go together and, as far as possible, have each point lead naturally to the next point. In some cases, it will be effective to build to a good conclusion by placing the strongest point last. We should develop a closing that will motivate our listeners to take action.

In addition to camp meeting Bible Teaching services, there may be times when as branch church pastors, we determine that a series of Bible Studies would be profitable for the local congregation. These will generally be scheduled on weeknights when fewer visitors would be likely to attend. In these cases, the structure of the service will be slightly different. While we might arrange for a congregational song or two, or perhaps a special number by a vocalist, most of the time would be given over to a Bible study on the chosen topic, somewhat like an adult Sunday school class session.

[1] Review the sections of this manual titled *Sermon Preparation* and *The Message* for more detailed information on how to prepare a sermon.

Counsel for Ministers

The question arises from time to time if ministers are permitted to use PowerPoint or other means of electronic media for presenting Bible teachings during camp meeting. A variety of presentation methods are acceptable in a non-camp meeting setting, but at camp meeting, we want to maintain the traditional evangelistic spirit and flavor rather than adopting an approach that seems more appropriate at a seminar.

If you have questions regarding whether a particular method of presentation is appropriate at a given time, check first with the Superintendent General or your District Superintendent.

When Bible teaching services are held in the evening, it is important not to extend the service beyond the scheduled time. We want to encourage children and young people to attend the evening services, and if a Bible study goes too late on a weeknight, it may discourage those who are in school from attending. Many parents adjust scheduling so their children can attend services on a school night, in order to allow time for the students to complete their homework and get their necessary sleep. We do not want to make that even more challenging by extending the length of the service.

Each successive generation of young people is present in camp meeting Bible teaching services for only a brief window of time before they take summer jobs and cannot attend these morning sessions. If our young people do not hear the core doctrines of the Bible expounded during that brief timeframe, they may never hear them. If it falls on us to give a camp meeting Bible teaching, we should consider preaching on doctrinal subjects first. Textual studies or expository teaching on a passage such as the Beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer, or a particular Book of the Bible may also be considered. This type of message may not be as easy as a simple devotional study, but it is needful in terms of stabilizing individuals' walk with God.

Prayer Meetings

The Apostolic Faith organization sprang from a prayer meeting in early 1906 where the power of the Holy Ghost descended, and from our inception until now, we have emphasized the importance of prayer. The first part of our mission statement instructs us to "Pray!" It goes on to say, "We make prayer the basis of every ministry, and encourage communion with God as the way to grow to spiritual maturity in Him." Prayer always has been and, by the grace of God, always will be a cornerstone of Apostolic Faith practice.

There are times when the people of God gather with the exclusive purpose of devoting themselves to prayer, and we refer to gatherings of this nature as prayer meetings. Prayer meetings are usually held on a week night. Generally about midway through the allotted time period, when the greatest numbers of people are present, the pastor or minister in charge reads written prayer requests that have been placed on a pulpit in the front of the sanctuary or meeting place. The leader may also feel the necessity of exhorting the people to lay hold of God for a particular need, and this he should be free to do. Occasionally, he will suggest that those present join in a song or two, but our prayer meetings typically do not include special musical numbers or a sermon. Following the reading of requests, those who have gathered return to their knees, and bring these needs before the Lord.

In addition to scheduled prayer meetings, Apostolic Faith churches worldwide have times of prayer before and after each Gospel service. In these prayer services as well, workers and ministers join in united prayer for requests that have been submitted, and to ask God for the anointing of His Spirit to rest upon the activities of the organization.

"Men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1), for fervent prayer is behind every work that is powerful and effective against the powers of sin and Satan.

Water Baptismal Services

Those who have been truly born again and are living lives free from sin are eligible for the ordinance of Water Baptism. New converts should be baptized in water as soon as possible after their conversion.[1]

In the Apostolic Faith organization, we generally hold water baptismal services toward the close of each of our annual camp meetings. However, it is a good practice for pastors to arrange for water baptismal services in their local church when there are ne w converts, as not everyone will be able to be present at the camp meeting. If the local church does not have a baptistery, pastors may be able to arrange to use another church's facility for that purpose.

In some countries it may not be possible to make provisions for indoor water baptismal services. In these cases, the water baptismal service can be conducted at any suitable body of clean water. Fresh water is preferable to salt water for many reasons, but when fresh water is not available, ocean beaches may be used. If the baptismal service is to take place outdoors, tents or dressing rooms to accommodate the candidates should be arranged at the scene of the service.

It is preferable for candidates who desire to be baptized to indicate their intention prior to the baptismal service. At camp meeting baptismal services, candidates register ahead of the time at the campground office. When baptismals take place in local churches, the pastor should be aware of those who desire to be baptized, to be sure they are eligible and that they understand the meaning of this ordinance.

Some may question whether young children should be baptized. We do not baptize infants; individuals must have a definite experience of salvation in order to be eligible for water baptism. If a child is old enough to repent and believe unto salvation, we would not deny them the privilege of being water baptized, for Scripture does not indicate an age requirement for baptism.[2] We would, of course, want to be sure that the parents are aware of the child's desire to be baptized, and be in agreement with that step being taken.

A water baptismal service in the Apostolic Faith usually begins with a musical prelude. After congregational singing and prayer, a vocal solo or ensemble precedes a short message in which the minister addresses the individuals awaiting baptism. Typically, this message will emphasize to these new converts the fact that the step they are taking is a command of Scripture, and is an outward symbol of the inward work which has been accomplished in their lives through justification. If the candidates are unfamiliar with the actual baptismal procedure, the minister may briefly explain how they will be baptized.

Following the message, baptismal candidates form a line near the baptistery or body of water where the baptizing will take place. Typically children are baptized first, followed by the women, and finally the men. The beauty and sacredness of this time is enhanced by vocal or instrumental music rendered softly during the baptizing.

If there are a number of individuals to be baptized, it is advisable for two ministers to officiate together, one on each side of the candidate. The minister or ministers will enter the water ahead of the baptismal candidates. Then the candidates will approach the ministers one by one. If hundreds are being baptized, several pairs of ministers officiate simultaneously as space allows.

If two ministers are baptizing, they will stand facing each other. When the candidate enters the water, the ministers should guide him into a position between the two of them. The ministers will lock hands behind the candidate's upper back, and the candidate will fold both arms across his chest. The ministers will then place their other hands on top of the individual's forearms where the arms intersect. (Even if only one minister is baptizing, the same position is used.)

After asking the full name of the individual, the minister repeats the Biblical baptismal formula aloud, for the benefit of all who are witnessing the baptism. "Brother (or Sister) _____, we baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."[3] This same formula is repeated for each can-

didate. Then, with a gentle downward pressure, the candidate is immersed once, face upward in the water. If the person does not go completely under the water, the immersion should be repeated immediately, before the candidate steps out of the water.

We keep a record of those baptized in the Apostolic Faith organization. This is necessary for several reasons, among them being that a baptismal document giving the birth date and full name of an individual is often accepted as legal proof of identity. Pastors may obtain a supply of these cards from the headquarters.

In the United States, a copy of the baptismal registration card should be sent to the headquarters in Portland, Oregon, following the baptismal service, and the original retained in the branch church files. In countries outside of the United States, the duplicate copy should be sent to the District Headquarters.

[1] For information regarding the doctrine of water baptism, see the section of this manual titled *Water Baptism*.

[2] In some cases, young children may ask if they can be baptized, especially after seeing a baptismal service in the church. If a parent is uncertain whether the child really understands salvation and is ready for baptism, we may suggest that the parent talk with the child about what baptism represents, and then wait. If the child brings it up again after a period of time has elapsed, that might be an indicator that God is dealing with the child's heart and that he or she genuinely feels the need for taking this step.

[3] See Matthew 28:19.

Counsel for Ministers

If baptismal robes are available for baptismal candidates, they help promote modesty when the candidates come up out of the water. If robes are not available, candidates may be baptized in their normal attire, but it may be helpful to advise them not to wear sheer or lightweight clothing.

Some candidates will want to hold their noses as they are placed under the water, to avoid getting water into their nasal passages. This is allowed.

It may be helpful to instruct the candidates ahead of time to bend their knees slightly just prior to being immersed, as this will make it easier for the ministers to make sure they go completely under the water.

Lord's Supper Services

The observance of the Lord's Supper, a practice referred to in some religious circles as Holy Communion, is a regularly scheduled event in the Apostolic Faith organization.[1] We often allude to this special time, which occurs in conjunction with the foot washing service, as "Ordinance" or an "Ordinance service."[2] The Bible does not specify how often this observance should take place, but we typically hold ordinance services on a quarterly basis. The exact date of each observance should be decided by the local pastor, and announced well ahead of time to the congregation, so those in the church family have the best opportunity to arrange their schedules to make attendance possible.

All those who have been truly born again and are living free from sin are eligible to partake of the Lord's Supper. The Apostle Paul told individuals in the Early Church, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come," so we encourage followers of Christ not to absent themselves from the table of the Lord without valid reasons. The deliberate, ceremonial partaking of the emblems is a vital expression of our faith and commitment to the Gospel. It is a time of fellowship with each other and communion with God, and should be regarded by all believers as a glorious privilege.

As pastors, we should attempt to avoid scheduling our ordinance services at a time when visitors most likely would attend. However, if visitors happen to be present, we should explain in the announcement period that this is an ordinance service and is for those who are Christians. We do not restrict visitors who remain from taking part, but the Lord's Supper message should clearly explain the qualifications for participation. When this has been done, we have discharged our obligations before God in the matter.

The emblems we use in this sacred observance—unleavened bread and unfermented grape juice—symbolize the broken Body and shed Blood of our Savior. We do not use wine or juice that is fermented in any way. In countries where grape juice is impossible to obtain, powdered grape juice or frozen concentrate may be used, mixed with water to the correct strength.

The unleavened bread, or wafers, should be freshly made for each service. The wafers are often prepared in the minister's home or the church, but if this is not possible, preparation can be entrusted to a spiritually qualified member of the congregation. (The recipe we use for unleavened bread is provided below.) We should arrange to have the wafers (on plates) and the grape juice (in small cups) placed on a table in a room adjacent to the sanctuary prior to the public meeting.

Ordinance services generally begin with a musical prelude, and perhaps a congregational song or two.[3] At times there may be matters of a business or church family nature which the pastor chooses to take up with the congregation. Since those in attendance at an ordinance service are primarily individuals who make the Apostolic Faith their church home, the announcement period is a time when such matters may be presented to the congregation. We should address items of this nature as briefly as possible in order to keep the congregation's focus on the spiritual and sacred nature of the ordinance service. Another hymn may be sung at the close of the business portion of the service, or a special number presented, before the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is observed.

The sermon prior to distribution of the emblems should be relatively brief, and be based upon explanatory Scripture passages such as 1 Corinthians 11:23-34. Since the slaying of the Paschal lamb at the Jewish Passover foreshadowed the death of the Lamb of God, ministers may also allude to the account of the original Passover found in Exodus 12, or Scriptural accounts of the original institution of the ordinance. Other suitable texts are Matthew 26:17-29; Luke 22:7-23; and 1 Corinthians 10:16, 21.

At some point before the sermon on the Lord's Supper, two of the ministers or workers carry in the table bearing the emblems and place it in front of the pulpit. The same ministers will take the table back to the adjoining room at the conclusion of the Lord's Supper portion of the Ordinance service.

The congregation members kneel at their seats for a period of prayer following the sermon. At this time, the ministers gather around the table holding the emblems and consecrate them, asking God to bless them to the spiritual and physical needs of the people. The ministers then serve the emblems to the congregation, passing a plate containing the unleavened bread, followed by the juice, along each row of kneeling saints. Often the ministers quote a short, encouraging Scriptural passage as they distribute the emblems, such as: "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come." Or they may choose other appropriate phrases such as: "In remembrance of Jesus," "In remembrance of Jesus' broken body," "In remembrance of Jesus' shed blood," or "Until He comes." These words remind the individuals receiving the emblems of the sacred nature of this holy ordinance.

Over the years, ordinance services have been especially blessed by God in the healing of the sick. The emblems bring to our remembrance the Atonement, purchased for us on the Cross, which includes the healing of our bodies as well as the salvation of our souls. It also reminds us to look for His return. God often meets with His people in a special way in these services, and faith takes hold of the promises. Blessings accrue to those who obey God in observing this ordinance of the Lord's Supper!

[1] Read the section in this manual on *The Lord's Supper*, under the heading *Doctrines of the Holy Scriptures* for more information on this Bible doctrine.

[2] The word *ordinance* means "A direction or command of an authoritative nature; something ordained or decreed by God; an established religious rite." Both the Lord's Supper and Foot Washing were practices established and ordained by Jesus Christ the night He was betrayed, so we have chosen to follow that Biblical pattern in the Apostolic Faith by observing these two ordinances together.

[3] In some of our churches, the ordinance service may follow an evangelistic service. When this is the case, the pianist or organist will begin playing softly as the normal altar service concludes. At that point, the audience and ministers will resume their seats and the ordinance portion of the meeting will begin.

Counsel to Ministers

In the days following the ordinance service, ministers may offer to bring the emblems to shut-ins who were not able to attend. Any unused portions of the bread or juice (other than that which is distributed to shut-ins) should be disposed of rather than consumed, since the emblems have been consecrated.

Lord's Supper Wafers

1 cup flour

1/4 cup shortening or butter

3 to 4 tablespoons water

Blend the flour and shortening until the mixture is crumbly, and then moisten with water until the dough gathers together into a clump. Roll dough out to a very thin sheet and place it on a baking sheet. Perforate the sheet with the tines of a fork to allow steam to escape; this will prevent air pockets from forming on the surface. With a sharp knife, score or cut the sheet of dough into 1/2 inch squares. Bake at 325 - 350 degrees until quite crisp. Separate the squares when cool. This recipe will make enough unleavened bread wafers for approximately 150 persons.

Foot Washing

Jesus Himself instituted the ordinance of foot washing.[1] We read in Scripture, "He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded" (John 13:4-5).

Since Jesus washed the disciples' feet directly after establishing the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, in Apostolic Faith churches we follow the same order, washing one another's feet immediately after partaking of the Lord's Supper. We refer to these two observances together as an "Ordinance service," and schedule such services on a quarterly basis.

While many religious organizations in our day observe the Lord's Supper (or Communion), the ordinance of foot-washing is not as commonly practiced. We do so in obedience to Christ's express command: "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14).[2] We believe that it is incumbent upon all followers of Christ to observe this ordinance, for Jesus said, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me" (John 13:8).[3]

Like the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and water baptism, the ordinance of foot washing is for the truly born- again. Blessings are promised to those who observe this command of our Lord, for the Bible says, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17).

In Apostolic Faith circles, the foot washing service begins after the congregation members resume their seats following the Lord's Supper. Often this portion of the Ordinance Service is opened with the singing of a hymn. Typically, the minister who brings the message on the washing of the disciples' feet will read John 13:2-17, which describes the institution of the ordinance. He explains its significance and obligation on the part of all Christians to observe it. It is also appropriate to remind the people of God regarding their duty to obey all of God's commands, and to rehearse the rewards that are promised for obedience.

When the sermon is concluded, the pastor or minister in charge appoints attendants who will bring the basins of water and towels to the congregation. At the headquarters church, orchestra and choir members are often asked to serve in this manner, but any group of truly saved individuals may do so. A curtain is then drawn through the center of the sanctuary, or the men and women move to separate rooms. The women take one location and the men the other, since men wash men's feet, and women wash women's feet.

A few inches of water (preferably tepid or lukewarm) is placed in each basin,[4] and the basins and towels are distributed. The people of God pair off, gird themselves by tying towels around their waists, and then wash and dry one another's feet.[5] If there are not a sufficient number of basins and towels for all of the participants, when one pair is finished with the basin and towel they may be passed on to the next in line so everyone has an opportunity to obey God's command. As we wash one another's feet, we pray for each other, encourage one another, and enjoy that special bond of fellowship that exists between those who love God and have a purpose to follow Him wholeheartedly.

God blesses when a body of believers obey His Word in the observance of this ordinance. In the Apostolic Faith organization, we look back on many glorious times of fellowship at these events. For that reason, we do not regard the washing of one another's feet as a mere ritual. Rather, we view it as a great privilege. As such, it is an act of service rather than an act of humility. It is an opportunity to obey God and do for each other what Jesus did for His disciples.

During the foot washing portion of the ordinance service, Gospel songs and hymns can be sung by the congregation, or soft organ or piano music can be provided as a background. When all the participants are finished, the men and women may gather together again for a time of singing, or the service may simply be closed with a brief benediction.

[1] Read the section in this manual on *Foot Washing,* under the heading *Doctrines of the Holy Scriptures* for more information on this Bible doctrine.

[2] The word *ought* in Jesus' day was a binding word, just as it is in our day. The dictionary definition is, "to be held or bound in duty or moral obligation: to be necessary." Therefore, we are duty bound and under direct command of Jesus Christ to wash one another's feet. The Apostle Paul, in his instruction to the young minister Timothy, tells him that for a widow to receive the benefits of widowhood within the church, she must meet the requirements and qualifications as recorded in 1 Timothy 5:9-10, one of which was that she must have "washed the saints' feet."

[3] Jesus washed the feet of all His disciples, but the minister does not wash the feet of all in the congregation. He commanded us to wash "one another's feet" (John 13:14).

[4] The basins may be filled ahead of the service if a central water supply is not available in the church.

[5] In some instances there will be an odd number of participants. It will then be necessary for three to wash each other's feet instead of the usual two.

Counsel for Ministers

If there are concerns about sanitation, household chlorine bleach is a powerful disinfectant that is inexpensive, easy to obtain, and strong enough to kill germs. Bleach is also very caustic and emits potentially lethal fumes, so bleach water should be mixed in a well-ventilated room and should never be used full-strength. When using bleach as a disinfectant, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends using a 1:10 solution.

As an alternative to chlorine bleach, tincture of iodine can be used as a disinfectant, at a ratio of 5 drops per liter. If iodine is used, you must allow the water to sit for thirty minutes before use. It works best if the water is over 68° F (21° C). Iodine is light sensitive and must always be stored in a dark bottle.

Baby Dedications

In Luke 2, we read that the earthly parents of Jesus brought Him as an infant to the Temple in Jerusalem "to present Him to the Lord" (Luke 2:22). Later, the Gospels tell us that little children and infants were brought to Jesus for Him to bless them.[1] (Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17). In accordance with this example, many parents in our Apostolic Faith churches want to publicly dedicate their children to the Lord.

Pastoring affords many joys to a minister, and one of the great privileges we have is that of dedicating babies. Standing beside the new parents, and holding their precious child in our arms, we bring the little one to the Lord in a prayer of commitment and consecration. Our sincere pleasure in participating in this event not only is meaningful to the parents, but it affects the congregation and increases their interest in the parents and children in our church family.

The dedication of a child to the Lord does not ensure that child's eternal destiny. The Bible teaches that forgiveness of sin is granted to those who recognize their need, come to Christ with a repentant heart, and believe unto salvation. No ceremony or religious observance can bring salvation. Thus, when parents come to us with a request to dedicate their child, we must be sure they understand that dedication has no moral significance in itself, but simply is a commitment to raise this child in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

In the Apostolic Faith organization, baby dedications are generally conducted as part of a regular service.[2] This often takes place immediately after the prelude which begins the meeting, or directly following the announcements. Typically, the baby dedication portion of the service follows this pattern.

The pastor or minister in charge announces that _____ (parents' names) have requested that their child _____ (baby's name), be dedicated to the Lord.

He gives a brief message relaying the Scriptural basis for this practice. This may include: citing examples such as that of Simeon (Luke 2:28) or Hannah (1 Samuel 1); the fact that dedicating a child to God reflects the parents' purpose to raise the child to obey and honor God; Jesus loved and placed special emphasis on children, so we should follow His example; and an admonition to those in the church family to support and pray for God's guidance of the parents, and for the infant's future.

Often following the message, a family member or one of the musicians sings a special song related to children or specific to child dedication. Then the minister asks the parents to bring the baby forward to the pulpit. While they make their way to the front, he may give the baby's full name and the date of birth. It is also tactful to mention other siblings.

The pastor takes the baby, and offers the dedicatory prayer while holding the infant.[3] He then presents the parents with the certificate of dedication. At times, the parents may be asked to share a brief testimony before they return to their seats in the congregation and the regular meeting resumes.

[1] See Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; and Luke 18:15-17.

[2] Occasionally, parents may wish to have the dedication prayer prayed at home, and we should arrange to do this if that is their desire.

[3] It is advisable to turn the baby's face away from you as you prepare to say the prayer. This lessens the likelihood that the child will be frightened by someone who they do not know well holding them. However, if the baby does cry, simply continue on with the prayer. If the child seems very frightened when you first reach for him, it is fine to simply place one hand gently on the baby's head or back, and say the prayer while the parent continues to hold him.

Youth Camps

Youth camps in the Apostolic Faith have proved to be an excellent environment for addressing eternal matters. This type of outreach builds on relationships already established within the church family, addresses spiritual needs that are already known, and provides the church with a natural follow-up opportunity. Over the years, many young people have been saved and received their deeper Christian experiences at youth camps. For these reasons, we have found that incorporating them as an integrated part of our efforts for the youth of our church is very beneficial.

The focus of these events is always on leading young people to salvation, for statistics indicate that more young people are saved at age eleven than at any other time. Young people in the age group that typically attends youth camp are emotionally ready to receive the Gospel—after high school, young people are far less likely to respond to the call of God. With this in mind, we do our best to create an atmosphere at youth camp where attendees can feel free to talk about their spiritual needs, ask questions, seek God, and worship.

Our youth camps are designed to be places where young people who regularly attend our Sunday schools can get together to enjoy good food, plenty of activity, and focus on the things of God. Each day's schedule is packed with various outdoor sporting events such as swimming, volleyball, and basketball, and indoor activities like board games and crafts. These recreational activities are interspersed with chapel services, Bible lessons, and in-cabin devotionals.

If a youth camp outreach is feasible for your local church, there are several steps that you will need to take.

Get authorization. Discuss with your District Superintendent the possibility of holding a youth camp and with his help, determine the basics. Discuss whether the youth camp would be for your local church only or in conjunction with other nearby Apostolic Faith churches, and establish when it would be held. You should plan this initial step at least one to one-and-a-half years in advance of the projected camp dates.

Evaluate child/youth risk management issues. A youth camp setting is potentially a high-risk environment for children and youth. It is imperative that camp directors scrupulously implement the guidelines established in the *Apostolic Faith Safety and Security Manual* regarding such matters as staff selection, required training, supervision, discipline procedures, the two-adult rule, etc.[1]

Establish parameters. Determine what will your budget be, and what ages will be invited to participate,[2] and dates that will not conflict with any other organizational event nearby.

*Find an appropriate camp location***.**[3] Investigate camp and conference facilities in your area, evaluating fees, types of accommodations, recreational opportunities, etc. Plan to tour the camp before reserving it.

Choose a camp theme. This should be a phrase the campers will relate to, that is age appropriate, and that can be easily developed by your youth camp staff. It could be based on a passage of Scripture, a line from a Gospel chorus or song, a play on words, etc. Relate to this theme as many of your activities, chapel services, and in-cabin devotionals as possible. The more you emphasize it, the better the campers will retain it.

*Determine cost for campers***.** Our goal should be to make the camp as economically feasible as possible. In addition to the fee charged by the camp itself, you will need to factor in costs of transportation, crafts and supplies, food, etc. Announce the cost when you begin promoting the youth camp, to allow students and families enough time to plan for the expense.[4]

*Recruit staff and ensure proper training***.** As well as appointing a camp director and finding counselors, you will need to consider guest ministers, safety and medical staff, an audio/video coordinator, a music leader, sports and recreation directors, lifeguards, craft supervisors, bus drivers, and cooks and kitchen staff (if food service is not provided by the camp managers).[5] Create lists of duties for all involved so that everyone knows their responsibilities. Make sure that all staff members are informed of and fulfill all training

requirements established the Apostolic Faith Church Safety and Security manual.

Plan and delegate oversight of recreational activities. Organize or assign the planning of sports activities and competitions, crafts, and evening events.

Prepare for camp chapel services. Select and contact ministers who will participate. Arrange for a song leader, instrumentalists, and someone to arrange special music for the services. Be sure that all participants are aware of the camp theme so your chapel services emphasize the focus of the week.

Promote. You may wish to print posters advertising the youth camp and display them in your church. Include information in the church bulletin, mention it in Sunday school classes, and call teenagers in the church to personally invite them. You may also wish to post information on your church website or Facebook page.

*Prepare and distribute application forms to prospective attendees***.** Be sure the application form includes at least two emergency contact numbers, insurance information, and an authorization/consent to treatment by the parent/guardian. It should also obtain information regarding allergies or medical concerns, and provide space for parents to list any restrictions (such as no swimming) or other instructions that will assist the staff in keeping the child safe and well.[6]

Arrange transportation. In addition to transportation of campers and staff and their luggage, you will also need to provide for the conveyance of craft supplies, sporting equipment, concession goods, food and cooking equipment, etc.

Prepare and distribute handouts for campers and staff. These may include:

- Introduction to the camp
- List of what to bring
- Information about the camp theme
- Camp rules/code of conduct
- Dress code
- Map of the facilities
- List/schedule of staff duties
- Daily schedule and menu

Host a pre-camp staff meeting. Use this session to discuss camp rules and implementation, distribute schedules and other camp information, assign camp duties, explain the camp theme, etc. A unified approach is essential to a good camp! Encourage your staff to prepare for youth camp by praying, reading through all of the provided materials, studying the camp theme and devotional material, planning Bible learning activities for their group of campers, and knowing the campsite and rules so that they can guide decisions and answer questions by the campers.

Register the campers. Appoint an individual who is good at detail and accounting to be responsible for the registration process. Set up the registration area well in advance for early arrivers. Make sure that you have complete information for each child before they are taken to the camp.

Encourage counselor/camper interaction. Counselors should do their best to learn the spiritual condition of each camper in their cabin as soon as possible once the youth camp begins. They should watch for opportunities to have conversations with each student, and be alert for areas where they can be of help or offer guidance. Encourage staff members to do all they can to pray with and support those who are seeking the Lord.

Plan for appropriate follow-up. As pastors, we should have a general, flexible plan in mind of how to use

our Sunday school, youth services, or church gatherings to deepen the connections and encourage spiritual growth among the young camp attendees as they move into a new school year. Urge your staff counselors to capitalize on the spiritual momentum generated by youth camp by following up with the students who were in their cabins. There is probably not another time of year when young people are more enthused about the Gospel and ripe for spiritual growth, and we should do our best to make the most of it.

The exact structure of each day's activities at youth camp is flexible, but a typical youth camp schedule could be developed along these lines.

- Reveille/wake up call
- Flag raising
- Breakfast and prepare for inspection
- Cabin inspection
- Chapel service
- Recreational activities and crafts
- Lunch
- In-cabin devotional time
- Recreational activities and crafts
- Afternoon concession
- Dinner
- Recreational activities
- Evening concession
- Flag lowering
- Evening chapel or activities

The health and safety of those attending our youth camps is of prime importance. Campsite facility managers are responsible for meeting state requirements regarding sanitation, insurance liability, food preparation and handling, safe facilities, and items of this nature. However, as youth camp site users, we also have responsibilities. We must make sure that we are in compliance with state standards regarding background checks of staff, adequate supervision of camp activities,[7] safe use of recreational and other equipment, proper fire and safety precautions, sufficient medical staff, and proper water safety procedures for swimming pools and natural bodies of water in the vicinity.

To make sure that your camp attendees stay safe and well, give your camp nurse a list of students with allergies and medication needs. Ensure that no medications are kept in the cabins—the camp nurse should be responsible for making sure these are properly administered. Over-the-counter medications brought to camp by students should be turned over to the camp nurse so a record can be kept of what medications are being taken and when.

You should provide the food preparation staff with a list of students with food allergies ahead of time, so substitutions can be made. And you will also want to give your camp sports and activity directors with a list of those who have restrictions in terms of physical activities, such as swimming.

In conjunction with the safety measures employed by staff members, it will be helpful to establish a code of conduct for both the staff and the campers. The camp director should make sure all those who attend the youth camp know the camp boundaries and are familiar with the regulations so that everyone has a safe and

enjoyable camp experience. While we try to have as few rules as possible, willful violations must be dealt with. While some regulations may vary from location to location, based upon the particular environment, the following are general guidelines which pertain to all of our youth camps.

- Staff members will set a good example in behavior, attire, and adherence to camp guidelines. There should be no private one-on-one situations with those of the opposite gender.
- Campers will follow the schedule of activities during their week of camping.
- Campers must obey the directors and youth camp staff members at all times.
- Campers must follow the established safety and dress code requirements.
- No illegal drugs, tobacco, or alcoholic products are allowed at the camp.
- No weapons, firearms, firecrackers, or explosives of any kind are allowed at the camp.
- Any injury must be reported immediately to the camp nurse and directors.
- No camper will be permitted to leave the campground without the permission of the directors.
- Rock throwing, stick duels, and other potentially dangerous behaviors are prohibited.
- All hikes must be authorized and led by a camp staff member.
- Regulations concerning water activities must be strictly observed.
- Campers are to refrain from bullying, hazing, or destructive or dangerous pranks.
- Campers are expected to be respectful of others, remain in their cabins at designated times, and avoid loud talking or other disturbances after "lights out,"
- Campers will be held responsible for deliberate or careless destruction or defacing of camp property.

Because we are a Christian organization, we encourage including a dress code for the camp when the application materials are distributed so attendees can bring appropriate attire. Staff members at our church youth camps are examples to the young people as to what constitutes acceptable dress for a Christian, so their casual apparel needs to exemplify modesty. Youth camp staff members should encourage the campers to follow through by observing the guidelines provided.

In the dress code, we ask that those who attend Apostolic Faith youth camps wear only modest swimming apparel. Two-piece or skimpy suits are discouraged for girls, as well as extremely brief or tight swim trunks for boys. Swimsuits are only for swimming, and are not to be worn as play clothes. Shorter shorts and tank tops are only allowed for swimming. When students are finished swimming, they should be instructed to change back into other recreational clothing.

We also ask that our campers do not wear items such as halter tops, tops that expose the midriff, spandex-type shorts, short shorts, tight or revealing clothing, sleeveless t-shirts, or t-shirts with logos that displays or promotes tobacco, alcohol, controlled substances, or inappropriate language or pictures. All shorts and dresses should be of a modest length. Campers should be instructed to bring appropriate clothes for chapel, recognizing that this is a church youth camp, not a recreational summer camp.

Our goal is that the young campers will emulate the staff's consistent example of Christianity in action. One of their most lasting memories of youth camp will be the loving example the staff set before them each day during the camp.

In conclusion, we should depend on prayer as our source of strength and wisdom in all of the efforts associated with youth camp. The opportunity to win another soul for His Kingdom should be exciting and challenging to all of us. Youth camp may well be the starting point for a young person's walk with the Lord

that will end in a glorious eternity, and with that goal in mind, it is worthy of our best efforts to make it a success.

[1] For more information regarding safety procedures and guidelines for youth camps, see the *Procedure Guidelines for Youth Camp Personnel.* This document is available through the headquarters office, and is posted on the church website at www.apostolicfaith.org.

[2] At the headquarters church, youth camp is held for those from fourth grade through high school. However, factors such as number of potential campers in various age groups, what type of camp accommodations are available within a reasonable distance, and how many staff members you have available will all impact the final decision.

[3] You should begin this process a year and a half or two years ahead of your first camp, as many retreat or camp facilities book a year in advance, and the best and most economical facilities are reserved long in advance of the summer season.

[4] Some churches have organized efforts to help the young people earn their way to camp.

[5] Nearly half of the states in the United States require criminal background checks for anyone who works in a day camp. If you are unfamiliar with your state's regulations, contact the officials of your state or your legal representative to be sure that you are in compliance with all regulations. Even if your state does not have such a requirement, we want to be absolutely certain that those who take part in staffing our youth camps has a clear and clean Christian record and testimony.

[6] A sample youth camp application form can be found on the safety section of the church website at www.apostolicfaith.org.

[7] As part of the license requirements, some states have counselor-to-child ratios for youth camps, in order to ensure that the children are well-supervised. States may also have ratios for specific activities, such as a counselor-to-child ratio while young people are swimming. The facility director should inform you of these regulations when you reserve the camp, but if you have any doubts or concerns, it may be advisable to personally check state regulations or consult with your legal representative.

Counsel for Ministers

In the past, some of our Apostolic Faith churches have considered purchasing a youth camp facility. However, in most cases this is not financially prudent. In addition to the purchase cost, a chapel, food service area, and sleeping facilities would need to be constructed. In addition to that initial outlay, it is very expensive to maintain such property and pay for the necessary insurance, and so on, when the use is only occasional.

If property is donated to the church for the purpose of a youth camp, the practicality of maintaining it should be discussed with the Superintendent General or your District Superintendent.

Vacation Bible Schools

Vacation Bible School (VBS) is an outreach tied to Sunday school in a number of our Apostolic Faith Churches. It is often held in the summer or other school vacation times. Each year's program has a Biblical theme, which is presented by a crew of enthusiastic volunteers ranging from high school age young people through grandmothers. They spread the Gospel in a setting complete with games, skits, crafts, music, and life-changing Bible stories.

Year by year, the numbers attending these neighborhood events have increased. However**,** enrollment numbers are not what is ultimately important, but the number of children and families who hear and respond to the Gospel as a result of VBS. Some of the children who come do not attend Sunday school regularly, and may have little or no understanding that they are in need of a Savior. When they attend a VBS in one of our churches, we want them to hear about Jesus and what He can do in their lives.

If you feel a VBS outreach is a possibility for your local congregation, there are a number of steps you will need to take.

Make prayer a part of your planning. In order for any outreach effort to be successful, prayer needs to be a part of every step. We need God's help if we want to achieve results that will count in eternity.

Consider the basics. Evaluate your support base, making sure that you have enough volunteers in your congregation to staff this type of effort. Establish a budget, factoring in not only the curriculum cost, but also such items such as decorations, props, and snacks. Determine what ages of children to invite, and what rooms in your church to utilize.

Decide on a date. Work with those in your church who will oversee this event to determine the best date. In addition to considering organization events and your local church schedule, you may wish to give thought to major occurrences in your community and when other local churches are planning their VBS programs.

Choose your curriculum. Some churches opt to create their own VBS programs. However, while we rarely recommend using material not published by the Apostolic Faith organization, VBS is one area where it may be considered. Many curriculums are available for purchase from independent publishing houses, and these offer a wide range of presentation materials and marketing tools.[1] You will be able to review many of these and see sample lessons online. Bear in mind that most VBS programs do allow you to purchase a basic kit without all the optional components. Whether you choose to make your own or purchase a curriculum, make sure your choice is fun, engaging, and most importantly, Bible-based.[2]

Recruit volunteers and ensure proper training. In addition to a VBS director, you will need to find group leaders, a music/song director, Bible story tellers, an audio/video technician (if you plan to incorporate the song videos that are provided with some curriculums), and game, craft, and snack supervisors. If possible, enlist someone with a camera to come and take pictures each day. Since most schools are not in session during the summer months, you may be able to use your high-school age young people as assistants. Parents of children who will attend might be able to invest an evening in making goodie bags, setting up classrooms, or making decorations. Make sure that volunteers are informed of and fulfill all training requirements established the Apostolic Faith Church Safety and Security manual.

Plan the activities, crafts, and snacks. Make sure the craft activities you choose are age-appropriate for the children who will attend your event. Craft supplies can be a major expense, so you may wish to skip the expensive craft kits that are offered with the major VBS curriculums, and find a craft-oriented person in your congregation to devise your own. Plan games and activities that can be adapted to various age and skill levels. And be sure to evaluate each aspect of your program in regard to ease vs. complexity. We all have to negotiate time in our busy lives, so be sensitive to how much you are asking from your volunteers.

Invite congregation members to contribute. Those in your congregation who cannot directly participate in

VBS may be happy to provide paper goods, snack items, or craft supplies. Make a detailed list of what you can use, and post it on your church bulletin board, along with information regarding where to drop them off and the date by which you need them.

Publicize the event. Many of our churches have found that signage in the church yard is a good way to inform children in the neighborhood of the upcoming VBS event. Be sure to send home notices with the children who already attend your Sunday school, and encourage them to invite friends. Ask your members to invite neighbors or young family members. If the budget allows, you could also consider a mass mailing postcard, door hangers, flyers, or other advertising strategies.[3]

Communicate the plan. You should plan to meet with all of your VBS volunteers a few days before your event begins. Distribute the daily schedule, give out group assignments, and make sure everyone knows their roles. You may wish to do a walk-through to be sure group leaders know the routes to take between the rooms where the different activities will take place. If your curriculum plan includes learning new songs, it is helpful if staff members know the lyrics and actions ahead of time.

Adjust as needed during VBS week. Even the best thought-out plans will probably need to be adjusted as the week progresses. If you allow drop-ins or late registration, your numbers will fluctuate and adjustments to your groups of students will need to be made. For that reason, the VBS director should delegate all the teaching responsibilities in order to be free to make decisions during the week.

Evaluate and make notes. The director or an appointee should keep ongoing notes throughout the week. Observations about registration streamlining, quantities of supplies needed, staffing adjustments, traffic flow, types of games, etc. will be invaluable when you begin planning your next year's VBS program. Some churches have found it helpful to plan a "post-event" session where staff can evaluate together what worked well and what could use improvement.

Follow up. Some of our churches hold an "end of VBS" service to which they invite parents. The children sing the songs they learned during the week, and recite the Scriptures they memorized. If someone took pictures of your VBS, parents will enjoy seeing pictures of their children participating in the various events of the week. The message of the evening should be simple, child-friendly, and reinforce the principles learned during the week. Plan to make a follow-up contact with each child who attended, and include an invitation to Sunday school. And do not forget to express your appreciation to all of the volunteers for their long hours and dedication.

Jesus demonstrated His concern for children, and we want to do the same. Hosting a VBS is one way we can do so.

[1] Another advantage of purchasing a curriculum from an established publisher such as *Group, David C. Cook,* or *Gospel Light* is that you may be able to get secondhand props and extra supplies from another church that held their VBS event prior to yours. Also, most major VBS publishers have forums on their websites for churches to share ideas about how to implement the curriculum. This can be a great source of ideas. However, we must be certain that we do not present Calvinistic material; if you purchase a curriculum, you will need to review each segment and edit or delete as needed to make sure that what we teach the children is doctrinally sound.

[2] You may be able to obtain materials that another Apostolic Faith church used in a prior year. Connect with your headquarters church or District Superintendent to find out what materials might be available.

[3] For additional information on possible methods of promotion, see the section of this manual entitled *Promotion of Church Events*.

Counsel for Ministers

Most VBS publishers attempt to minimize doctrinal distinctions, because they want to make their material usable in all denominations. However, we must not assume that every VBS curriculum is doctrinally sound. Before you purchase a curriculum, it can be helpful to check to see if the publisher has a statement of faith. And be sure to read the Bible stories samples carefully and with discernment.

Also, be aware that many purchased curriculums do not use the King James Version of the Bible. Although some of the project visuals, posters, and craft materials may use other versions, we suggest that when feasible, you convert the Bible texts and memory verses to KJV.

Special or Combined Meetings

The Apostolic Faith organization sprang from revival meetings which took place in the early part of the twentieth century. Known as the Azusa Revival of 1906, the infilling of the Holy Spirit empowered many individuals in those services, and created an evangelistic fervor that quickly spread worldwide. It is no wonder, then, that the tradition of holding an annual series of special meetings continues to be a practice in our organization.

In the evangelical community, the phrase "revival meetings" refers to a series of Christian religious services held in order to inspire a church congregation and to win new converts. In the Apostolic Faith organization, a series of specially promoted meetings—many times featuring a visiting minister—are more typically referred to as "special meetings." If several branch church congregations gather at a host church for a series of meetings, these services are called "combined meetings." Both special meetings and combined meetings are very closely related to revival meetings, as the majority of our services have an evangelistic theme. The length of such a series of meetings varies. Currently three or four days is typical, although week-long sessions are still held in some of our churches.

There are a number of reasons why it is good for a church to occasionally schedule a series of special meetings.

- The body of Christ will be blessed and souls stirred when we set aside time to seek for spiritual renewal and to intercede for lost souls.
- Our congregations will find it refreshing to hear the "old story" through a new voice. Though we all preach the same truth, each of us has a different style and manner of delivery. A visiting evangelist reinforces what we preach, while drawing from a different set of life experiences and examples.
- As ministers, we are encouraged and challenged by the insight of our peers. It is good for us to have an opportunity to be nourished spiritually by our fellow ministers, especially when we serve in a location where assisting ministers are in short supply.
- Individuals who do not normally attend church will often come to special meetings when visitors are expected or special events are scheduled.
- Unbelievers have multiple opportunities to respond to God's call during special meetings. Sometimes the initial stirring in a person's heart becomes more compelling with repeated hearing of the Word of God.
- The people of God enjoy fellowship with like-minded believers, and the value of such fellowship cannot be over-estimated. Young people especially will gain from the opportunity to get acquainted with the youth of other Apostolic Faith churches, sometimes forging lifelong friendships that provide an ongoing source of spiritual encouragement and strength.

In the United States, scheduling should be coordinated with the District Superintendent in order to avoid conflicts and to space the services in the various locations far enough apart on the calendar to allow for maximum participation. In countries outside of the United States, the District Superintendent in each area will work with local pastors to develop an appropriate schedule for special meetings.

It is the pastor's responsibility to oversee special meetings at the local church. This includes notifying neighboring branch churches, making arrangements for a visiting minister, and coordinating all activities during the series of meetings. No specific format is designated for the series of meetings; it is up to each pastor to determine what will be included. In addition to church services, often a youth rally, concert, prayer breakfast, Bible competition, or other activities are planned. In many of our churches, a theme is chosen for the series of meetings. Typically, this would be a phrase or portion of a Scripture verse.

What the host church offers in terms of accommodations varies from church to church. In some locations, the congregation is able to provide housing for guests who attend, while other churches do not have the resources to do this. In those cases, the host church should provide a motel list with their flyer so people can make their own arrangements. If some housing is available, usually the first priority is to house the youth who will attend, because they are less likely to have the means to make their own arrangements. Often, the congregation members at the host church combine their efforts to provide a few meals at the church during the series of meetings.

The host church should reimburse the visiting minister for out-of-pocket expenses. This would include travel, meals, motel, etc. It is also thoughtful to give a token gift of appreciation.

Flyers with dates and a summary of the special activities can be sent to nearby branch churches. The same information should be emailed to events@apostolicfaith.org to be posted on the international calendar. Any decisions on local advertising are made by the pastor, but options include postcards or flyers for congregation members to distribute, a banner for the front of the church, online free local listings, announcements on local radio stations and community calendars, or advertising in a local newspaper.

Pastors should post any flyers or information pertaining to special meetings being held in neighboring branch churches. If the church is within reasonable distance, the local pastor should encourage all who are able to attend the meetings, and encourage those who are not able to go to be supportive with their prayers. This is a vital part of supporting the family of God.

Counsel for Ministers

We must guard against a tendency to measure the "success" of a series of meetings by what is happening *to* people rather than how the Holy Spirit works *in* people. God's greatest works are usually done internally, not publicly. A Gospel service is effective when Jesus is lifted up (John 12:32), and people worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:23). While periods of outpouring and revival from God are precious and deeply appreciated, the ongoing development of a close walk with God comes in small increments, "precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isaiah 28:10). These quiet, inward works of the Spirit may not be immediately obvious.

In New Fields

One of the primary purposes of the Apostolic Faith organization since our inception has been to lead men and women to the place of repentance and forgiveness for sin, and to an understanding of the Latter Rain Gospel. This necessitates being alert to opportunities to expand our outreach into new fields.

Typically, establishing a church in a new area begins with interest expressed in our organization. The initial contact may have occurred when an individual or group received Gospel literature printed by the Apostolic Faith, visited our church website, or had a personal contact with someone connected to this work. Often, there is a period of correspondence with headquarters, in which the Biblical doctrines and practices upheld by this organization are explained in greater detail. Gradually, this correspondence provides insight about the group's understanding of our doctrinal position and its willingness to follow the practices and guidelines of the Apostolic Faith work. In time, this may lead to a visit from a representative of headquarters, at which time the possibility of the group becoming a part of the organization may be explored as the Spirit leads.

In a case where a group of associated groups or church congregations has expressed interest in becoming a part of the Apostolic Faith, it may take a number of visits from a headquarters representative before we can be assured that they are all one with us in doctrine and are willing to adopt our methods of operation. This Minister's Manual may serve as a basis for explaining in detail what we stand for and how we operate. Leaders of the congregations can also be encouraged to view the services posted on our organization's website as a means of gaining understanding about how we conduct our services.

Meetings in Homes and Temporary Facilities

Many Apostolic Faith branch churches started from gatherings of believers in private homes. We encourage this method, especially in locations where there are only a few believers. Holding Bible studies, prayer meetings, or even simple church services in a home, and inviting neighbors, friends, and relatives to attend, is in accord with the pattern established in Scripture. Members of the Early Church taught the Gospel in private homes as well as in larger assemblies.[1] In some towns, private homes served as meeting places for smaller churches,[2] while at other times, groups simply gathered in a home. According to Acts 10, it was in one such meeting in the home of the Roman centurion Cornelius that God revealed to Peter that the Gospel message was for all who would believe in Jesus Christ.

Obviously, any home meetings held under the auspices of the Apostolic Faith organization must uphold the doctrines and practices of this organization, and operate under the supervision of the nearest District Superintendent.

Church services in homes usually are quite simple. Sometimes they are structured along the lines of a Sunday school class or informal Bible study. If there are enough people present, the program may consist of singing, perhaps a testimony or two, Bible reading, a brief message, and a time of prayer. In some cases, small groups have found that watching services on the corporate website at www.apostolicfaith.org can be a real blessing and uplift. Workers from an Apostolic Faith branch church can also go, whenever that is possible, to support the efforts of those holding meetings in areas where there is no established church as yet.

If space constraints permit, those who attend home meetings should be encouraged to invite others who might be interested in gathering with the group of believers. If the numbers grow and a solid foundation of workers develops, it may be possible in time to secure a larger facility where Gospel services could be held.

Most new churches meet at least for a time in rented facilities such as schools, hotel conference rooms, or community centers. Though the meeting location is temporary, those in charge should make every effort to create a warm and inviting environment. The facility should be clean, provide comfortable seating and adequate parking, and be equipped with a suitable sound system. Signage directing visitors to the meeting area, along with flowers and a display of Gospel literature, can help to create a friendly atmosphere. The goal should be to make visitors feel welcome and encourage them to come again.

Evangelistic programs/outreaches

Conducting evangelistic campaigns is another form of outreach into a new field that has brought fruitful results in the Apostolic Faith organization. Typically, we hold campaigns of this nature to ascertain whether there is interest or potential for developing a work in a particular location. In years past, churches of a neighborhood or community nature occasionally have opened their doors to us. However, we have found that it is often best to conduct our campaigns in rented conference rooms or other community facilities, in order to avoid restrictions on our preaching or manner of worship.

A well-organized evangelistic campaign will have at least five major components:

- *Prayer.* Any endeavor of this nature should be prefaced with much prayer, that God would prepare hearts and open doors in advance of the series of meetings.
- *Planning.* As with home meetings, evangelistic campaigns held under the auspices of the Apostolic Faith organization should be authorized by the nearest District Superintendent or conducted by a representative of the headquarters church. Those who are making arrangements should notify any believers or correspondents in the area where the campaign will be held well in advance of the meetings, so they can make plans to attend. They should also locate an interpreter if needed, and reserve a suitable facility with adequate seating, parking, and sound system.
- *Publicity.* If there are Apostolic Faith believers in the target location, they may be able to handle this aspect of the evangelistic campaign. Efforts could include posters, banners, radio and newspaper ads, promotion in schools or markets, or advertising flyers mailed out to the local neighborhood, but personal invitations are usually the most effective way to reach interested individuals. When it is possible to take a group of musicians to assist in the campaign, their involvement can be a promotional tool. At times, we have scheduled a concert on the first evening, to stimulate interest and introduce the series of evangelistic meetings. When this is the case, it is a good practice to include an invitation to the remaining services in the printed concert programs. We should also make sure a selection of our Gospel literature is available for those who attend the concert.
- *Program.* We generally structure the meetings of an evangelistic campaign in a manner similar to the Gospel services held in our churches. When possible, it is a good practice to take a group of Gospel workers, musicians, and singers to assist. Not only will the music they provide be a benefit to the meeting, but the Spirit-filled testimonies of godly men and women offer irrefutable evidence of God's power, and will be a great support for the evangelistic sermon that should conclude each service.
- *Follow-up*. Make an effort to gather the names and addresses of those who attend, so that local believers or the headquarters church can follow-up the series of meetings with an additional contact.

Expansion into new fields takes far more than simply seeing opportunities. We must be certain that our timing and the steps we take toward evangelizing and/or establishing a work in a new location do not get ahead of God. Wherever God guides, He provides. Ultimately, the work will grow and expand according to local response in any given area, and God's sovereign will. If He wants us to move forward, He will open the doors, and we must always align ourselves with His purpose and timing. When we do, a small seed sown in good soil and watered with prayer can result in a bountiful spiritual harvest for God's kingdom.

[1] See Acts 5:42 and 20:20.

[2] See Romans 16:5, 1 Corinthians 16:19, and Philemon 1:2.

Counsel for Ministers

It is important for us to remember that while growth is the natural state of a healthy organism, there are different kinds of growth, some of which have nothing to do with numbers. A church can be alive and growing spiritually even though the number of people attending remains constant. If those in the church are growing "in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18), and following His will for their lives, both individually and corporately, that church is experiencing true growth. Conversely, a church can see its numbers increase, and still be spiritually lifeless. While expansion is important and we should always be alert for outreach opportunities, numerical increase in our numbers is not our primary goal.

We have found that entire sanctification and the sanctity of marriage are two doctrinal teachings that we must explore especially carefully and thoroughly with those who express an interest in becoming a part of the Apostolic Faith work. It is necessary to be certain that we are unified in understanding, as some people who generally agree with our teachings have a slightly or totally different view of these two doctrines.

Ordination and Installation Services

It is biblical for the church to set apart individuals in the ministry for special tasks of leadership.[1] In the Apostolic Faith organization this is done through ordination and/or installation. Ordination Services and Installation Services are handled in a similar manner.

Ordination Services

Ordination is the public ceremony by which leaders of the church authorize a minister to serve as a pastor or other designated role in the Apostolic Faith work.[2] While ordination does vest in that individual the legal authority to perform certain civil duties and conduct business as a representative of the organization, we view the event primarily as a solemn, spiritual charge and commissioning as much as a legal or liturgical rite. It is important as an acknowledgement of the prior divine call, commission, and qualification of the person, though it is not a requirement for serving as a minister.[3]

In the Apostolic Faith organization, we typically hold ordinations during a regular church service or during an ordinance service. At the appointed time during the meeting, the Superintendent General or the District Superintendent presiding over the ordination ceremony announces to the congregation that the designated minister is to be ordained at that time. Often, he gives a brief explanation of the Scriptural purpose and basis for ordination. Then, in accordance with examples provided in the Word of God,[4] members of the ministry and elders lay their hands on the minister, and pray together for divine anointing upon him or her.[5] Those who are present join in prayer that God's blessing will rest upon the life and service of the one being ordained.

We believe that it is the Holy Spirit who confers authority and power for ministry, rather than those who participate in the ordination ceremony. No particular person or group of individuals is essential to the ordination process; it can be done by any minister or ministers who have been granted permission to do so by the leadership of the Apostolic Faith organization.

Installation Services

Installation is similar to ordination in that it is a public ceremony by which leaders in the Apostolic Faith organization appoint a minister to a designated leadership role in our work. The main difference is that an installation does not include legally-issued credentials or certification; rather, it represents a corporate appointment or designation within the organizational structure of the Apostolic Faith. Often, installation appointments relate to supervision of geographic districts where our churches are located, or serving on a Board of Trustees.

In some countries or regions of the Apostolic Faith work, installation services are held for pastors, though this is not required when a minister assumes a pastoral role. At the headquarters church, installation services relate specifically to the appointment of District Superintendents.

The service itself is generally conducted much like an ordination, by the laying on of hands by qualified ministers and elders.

In the United States, the credentials and authorization of both ordained and installed pastors can be revoked at any time by the Superintendent General if the minister's faith and practice fail to align to the Gospel of Christ, or cease to be in accordance with the doctrines, constitution, and bylaws of the Apostolic Faith organization. In countries outside of the United States, the District Superintendent is authorized to do this.

[1] See Acts 1:21-26; 6:1-6; 13:2-3.

[2] See the topic *Ministerial Credentials and Ordination* for more information on this subject.

[3] In some cases, individuals in our work have assumed the role of pastor because a sudden vacancy in the pastoral ranks necessitated immediate placement of a minister in a particular location. In those cases, unless the pastoral assignment is designated as being only temporary, the acting pastor may be ordained at a time of the District Superintendent's choosing. During the interim, he is allowed to perform all of the functions of a pastor except those for which the State requires an ordained minister.

[4] See 1 Timothy 4:14 and 2 Timothy 1:6.

[5] In light of the Biblical role of women in the church, the Apostolic Faith organization makes no distinction between men and women in the work of the ministry. Godly women who give evidence of the call of God upon their lives, and who qualify spiritually, are accorded the same privileges as men to labor in the ministry. See the topic *Women Preachers* for more information on this subject.

Ministers Meetings

Ministers meetings are regularly scheduled events in the Apostolic Faith organization. At these sessions, those who serve as ministers and pastors in our work gather to study topics relevant to our ministerial responsibilities, and to hone our abilities through structured training, that we may be "able ministers of the new testament" (2 Corinthians 3:6).

At the headquarters church in Portland, ministers meetings are held every year during the spring special meetings and the summer camp meeting. All ministers and pastors, both active and retired, are encouraged to attend. These times remind us that we are not serving in isolation, no matter what our geographic location or proximity to other Apostolic Faith churches. Rather, we are part of a divinely ordained and God-commissioned group, and we approach the responsibilities of our calling shoulder to shoulder with fellow ministers from around the world. As we share plans and goals and learn together, we come away feeling better equipped and inspired to putting our best efforts into moving the Gospel forward.[1]

In addition to the sessions held during special meetings and camp meeting, the ministerial staff in Portland meets from time to time throughout the year. Ministers meetings are also held during regional camp meetings and at district meetings, and should be held in individual churches where there are several on the local ministerial staff. Even if there are only two or three ministers at a given location, it is a good plan to meet occasionally to discuss ideas, plans, and details of the work.

Godly counsel is of particular benefit to those of us in the ministry. We need one another! Often the issues which face us cannot be shared with our families or the flock of God, but Scripture records numerous examples of spiritual leaders who conferred with each other regarding matters affecting the church. For example, the disciples discussed with elders of the early church the appointment of deacons to care for the widows (Acts 6), the prophets and teachers at Antioch sought God's direction together until the Spirit revealed that Barnabas and Saul were to be sent out as missionaries (Acts 13), and the apostles and elders in Jerusalem came together to confer about the danger of reverting to the law of Moses (Acts 15).

All of us can learn from the experiences of others. When we face challenges in our work for the Lord, those challenges are not unique—very likely some of our peers have been through similar circumstances. Older ministers can offer insights and perspective based upon years of experience in the Gospel. Proverbs 27:17 tells us that "Iron sharpens iron," and the guidance and advice of seasoned Gospel veterans is an invaluable resource. Ministers meetings are one venue where we can tap into that experience.

The ministers meetings held in Portland during special meetings and camp meeting have an annual theme. Over the years, these themes have included: *Higher Ground, Sharing God's Love, Follow Me, Hold the Fort, America's Mission Field, Lessons in Leadership, The Art of Preaching, God Gave the Increase,* and *Equipped to Serve.* Individual sessions under these headings have developed topics such as evangelism, helping troubled people, marriage and family issues, financial planning, enduring hardness, ministerial protocol, holding funerals, and a wide range of other topics. Various ministers are selected to act as facilitators/speakers for the sessions. In many cases, handouts and topic summaries are distributed to attendees. Transcripts and videos of these sessions are posted on the minister's page of the website at www.apostolicfaith.org.

In conclusion, the benefit of gathering together as ministers is much more than information shared or techniques we learn. An additional benefit comes in the cultivating of our unity of purpose. We are persuaded that this work has a unique calling in the world, and that the teachings and way of life the Latter Rain Gospel advocates are relevant today. Ministers meetings help us to keep moving forward with a unified purpose. Unity is not a goal that can be achieved once and then relegated to the sidelines for a number of years. It requires a constant process of communicating, adapting, evaluating, and learning. To walk in unity, we must have a shared understanding of how we operate, and ministers meetings are one of the ways we achieve this.

[1] For more information regarding interaction between pastors and ministers, see the section of this manual titled *Relationships with Other Ministers*.

Workers' Meetings

Those of us who serve as pastors in the Apostolic Faith organization occasionally hold meetings specifically for the people of God who are part of our church. We refer to these gatherings as "Workers Meetings." At times, we open such meetings to all who are involved in any capacity in the work of the Lord. In other circumstances, we invite only a particular group, such as the ushers, Sunday school teachers, or musicians. While our workers meetings may include instruction and challenge, our goal always should be to uplift, appreciate, and inspire our companions in ministry, remembering that we are all "labourers together with God" (1 Corinthians 3:9).[1]

Workers meetings are held for a variety of purposes.

Plan. When the local church undertakes a construction project, seasonal program, or community outreach, planning must occur. We often gather small groups of individuals from the church family who have appropriate skills or backgrounds, and work with them to establish direction, discuss implementation, assign tasks, and track progress, for Scripture tells us, "Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counselors they are established" (Proverbs 15:22).

Through the years, workers meetings have sometimes been held to discuss the purchase of a piece of property, securing of a different facility, refurbishing the sanctuary, or other business matters. We recommend using ordinance meetings as a time to accomplish this.

Inform. Those who are involved in the work obviously have an interest in the forward movement of the Gospel, so it is appropriate to bring them up-to-date occasionally on what has been happening in other locations around the world. Presentations related to a newly-emerging branch of the international work, the outreach at headquarters, or a particular missionary trip goal has proved to be a blessing and inspiration to the people of God. We have found that the more the people of God are informed about a particular outreach, the more wholeheartedly they will support it.

Encourage. Challenges come to every congregation. In such times, we may feel a need to gather those who carry the burden of the work and do what we can to encourage hearts. There are many Scriptural precedents for this. When the Children of Israel faced the Red Sea, Moses reassured them, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord" (Exodus 14:13). On the eve of crossing over into Canaan, Joshua encouraged the people that God "will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites" (Joshua 3:10). The Apostle Paul's letters often included words of support to his fellow workers. Encouragement has strengthened many an individual and group to overcome hard places.

Equip. As pastors, we have a responsibility to facilitate the efforts of the workers in the church. Meetings with groups such as Sunday school teachers, custodial staff, greeters, and musicians will help us understand their challenges and respond to their needs as God directs. In the spiritual realm, workers meetings offer a setting where we can teach and equip those involved in the work to be good altar workers, to give a strong testimony, to be friendly and welcoming to visitors, and other "family matters" of this nature.

Admonish. The New Testament is full of admonitions given by the Apostles to various groups in the Early Church. Peter taught, "All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5). Paul exhorted believers in Philippi to "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27), and instructed the Ephesian church to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). We too have a charge to "reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:2). Admonitions given in a group setting may eliminate the necessity of dealing personally with challenges that could otherwise come up. It will also band the workers together as a united force for God, and in unity there is strength.

Warn. There may be times when, as shepherds of the flock, we must identify errors that could threaten the spiritual well-being of our congregations. Paul cautioned the elders at Ephesus, declaring that after his departure "grievous wolves [shall] enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, of your own selves shall men arise…" (Acts 20:29-30). Like Paul, we must warn the people of God about harmful influences that can come from both outside and inside the church. Workers meetings traditionally have been the place where this is done, as such matters are best handled when only the family of God is present.

In conclusion, laboring together in the church with the saints of God requires unity, cooperation, and commitment to a common purpose. Workers meetings are one way we can cultivate these attributes, and thus influence God's people to continue to move forward in alignment with God's purposes for our organization.

[1] For more about our connection with those in our congregations, see the topic *Relationship with Workers in the Church* in this manual.

Marriage Ceremonies

General Instructions Regarding Marriage Ceremonies

It is a great privilege to preside over the marriage ceremony of a man and woman who desire to make a sacred and lifetime commitment to each other before God. In our society, many people regard marriage as little more than a temporary social agreement, but God's Word makes it clear that marriage is of divine origin and is a holy and binding covenant.[1] Therefore, as ministers of the Gospel and representatives of the Apostolic Faith organization, we want to do our best to ensure that each person taking the marriage vow does so with an understanding of the obligations he or she is undertaking.

As officiants who represent the Apostolic Faith organization, there are certain duties that we must fulfill in presiding over a wedding ceremony.

We must be sure that the marriage is right in the sight of God. Since marriage is a sacred institution originated by God himself, before we commit to performing a wedding ceremony we should be certain that the proposed union does not violate the law of God. This means that:

- We do not marry any individual who has a living marriage partner.
- We do not marry two individuals of the same gender. The Bible is clear that a physical relationship between two men or two women is an abomination.
- We do not marry a saved individual to an unsaved individual. Since marriage is a picture of the relationship between Christ and the Church, the two must be one in faith and doctrine.
- We do not marry individuals who fail to regard marriage as a binding, lifetime covenant.

In addition to declining to officiate at ceremonies where there is a clear violation of God's law, there are other circumstances where we do not feel it is appropriate for an Apostolic Faith minister to perform the ceremony. For example, we do not perform second marriages when there is a living spouse, even in cases where we believe the second marriage is a valid marriage in God's eyes.[2] Occasionally we will not feel clear about conducting a marriage ceremony even though the reasons are not as clearly defined. If we feel any hesitation about the advisability of a marriage, we should not allow ourselves to be persuaded to yield to the wishes of the couple and solemnize the marriage.

We must be sure that the marriage is in compliance with civil law. We do not perform any marriages which do not comply with the legal requirements for a valid marriage as prescribed by civil law. Before we commit to participating, we should acquaint ourselves with the laws of the state or country in which the marriage will take place.

As the officiant, we are responsible to:

- Decline to officiate at any marriage unless we are fully ordained and authorized to do so by both the Apostolic Faith organization and the laws of the civil state.
- Ensure that the marriage is in compliance with civil law in every respect, including such matters as residency status, age of parties involved, issues of consanguinity, and matters of this nature.
- Ascertain that the marriage license has been obtained. (In some locations, it must be obtained at least 72 hours before the wedding ceremony. This is the case in Multnomah County, where marriages at the headquarters church are performed.) It may be advisable to ask for the license to be brought to the wedding rehearsal, to be sure that it is not forgotten on the day of the event.
- Sign and send all legal documents to the appropriate civil agency after the wedding.

We must be sure that our participation is in accordance with the following guidelines established for ministers of the Apostolic Faith organization.

- We do not perform or participate in ring ceremonies, nor are ring ceremonies performed in our churches. If we are asked to officiate at a wedding outside of our church where the couple chooses to exchange rings, we must request that the ring exchange be performed outside of the ceremony that we are officiating.
- Our church sanctuaries are reserved for the weddings of our church members. We do not rent them out.
- If one Apostolic Faith pastor has declined to marry a couple because of questions regarding whether the union is right in the sight of God, in compliance with civil law, or advisable based upon issues of couple readiness, another pastor in our organization will not perform the ceremony.

We must be sure that the couple is prepared to accept the responsibilities of marriage to the best of our abilities. As ministers, we have a responsibility to evaluate the readiness of a couple for marriage. We do not marry a couple unless we have opportunity to meet with them for counseling several times over a period of at least two or three months.[3] This gives us an opportunity to explore the couple's personal goals and expectations for marriage, and to present them the counsel of the Lord with regard to the step they are about to take.

On occasion, we may be asked to perform a marriage ceremony for a couple about whom we have reservations. We must make such decisions on a case-by-case basis. Conditions that would require consideration include (but are not limited to): individuals who have previously lived together outside of marriage, individuals who have children from a prior relationship or from this relationship, premarital pregnancy, overall evidence of Biblical godliness prior to premarital counseling, or relationship issues between the prospective marriage partners prior to marriage. If we have questions about whether or not a proposed marriage is advisable, we should consult with the Superintendent General or our District Superintendent before making a commitment to officiate at the ceremony.

Once we feel clear in accepting the privilege of officiating at the marriage ceremony, our scheduled meetings with the couple should include making sure that all legal requirements for the ceremony have been met and reviewing with the couple our guidelines for weddings conducted in Apostolic Faith Churches (see below).

Our ability and preparedness as ministers to counsel with prospective couples to prepare them for marriage will vary. If we feel our expertise in this matter is limited, we may suggest helpful seminars, books, professional counselors, mentor couples, and/or other ways to facilitate the couples' marriage preparation. There are well-researched principles that help couples build healthy marriages, and we should not hesitate to recommend resources that will help toward this goal.

Finally, we must be sure that the marriage ceremony and reception follows the guidelines for weddings in Apostolic Faith churches. As ministers, we will participate in weddings from time to time, but to the couple being married, the wedding is one of the most significant events of their lifetime. For this reason we want to do all we can to make the ceremony joyous, and yet sacred and dignified. All the words, music, and activities in the service are intended to reflect the divine dimension of a human act of commitment. There are a number of guidelines for weddings held in our churches that will help us accomplish this.

- Apostolic Faith wedding ceremonies use the wedding vows included in this Minister's Manual.[4] The words of our wedding ceremonies have been carefully chosen to reflect the sacred nature of this event, and to establish the Biblical principles upon which a Christian marriage must be based. We do not allow the bride and groom to compose their own vows, rather than using ours. Couples who wish to personalize their wedding may do so by reciting a poem to each other, singing a special song, or including some other special tribute of their choosing.

- As officiating ministers, we can add to the unique nature of each wedding by incorporating the couple's individual histories into our comments, perhaps telling how the couple met and how their relationship developed. Many times we also include the spiritual history of the couple, sharing a part of their testimonies as a way of highlighting God's role in the marriage.
- Since marriage ceremonies are sacred events, those held in our church sanctuaries should not include hilarity, stunts, jokes, or inappropriate language or actions that would dishonor God. Weddings in our churches cannot be used in any way for advertising purposes. While we realize that a wedding is a happy time, it should be remembered that a serious step is being taken and emphasis should be placed upon its sacredness.
- Any decorations should be suitable for a church sanctuary. Arrangements should be made for their removal following the wedding. Permission must be obtained for any decoration that requires the removal of church pictures, signage, or other permanent facility equipment.
- All music played or sung during the wedding should be appropriate for a Christian ceremony. Since the ceremony will take place in the sanctuary of the Lord, the music should be edifying and preferably sacred. It is appropriate to ask the couple to review their music choices with you while the ceremony is still in the planning stage.
- All attire for the bride and attendants should be in keeping with Biblical standards of modesty. We ask that the women cover their shoulders and avoid plunging necklines. No matter what the current fashion trends, our policy on modest attire remains the same.
- Fireworks, smoking, and alcoholic beverages are not permitted in the church or on the church grounds. Items such as birdseed, confetti, or bubbles are only allowed outside of the church building if arrangements are made by the couple to have it cleaned up afterward.

Each minister should keep a record of marriages performed, with the names of the witnesses and other pertinent data, for future reference and for the records of the church itself.

[1] For more information on the Biblical doctrine of marriage, see the section of this manual titled *The Sanctity of Marriage*.

[2] An example of this would be a case when an individual desiring to marry was formerly married to someone who already had a living spouse. Although the Word of God does not prohibit that individual from marrying, (since the first union was not a right marriage in God's sight), we would not perform the ceremony.

[3] See the section of this manual titled *Premarital Counseling*.

[4] See the section of this manual titled *Ceremony Wording*.

Premarital Counseling

As ministers of the Gospel, we have a responsibility to present couples who plan to marry with the counsel of the Lord regarding the step they are about to take. The basis of Christian counseling is teaching how Biblical truth should be applied to our relationships with others. In a Christian marriage, two individuals enter into the most intimate and sacred relationship possible—aside from the decision to follow Christ, no other commitment will have as great an impact on their lives. It is our privilege to encourage them as they prepare for marriage.

Meeting with an engaged couple gives us an opportunity to personally direct them toward the basics of establishing a good and godly marriage. We should encourage them to make Jesus Christ not only their Savior, but also an integral part of their marriage—the third part of the threefold cord described in Ecclesiastes 4:12. A foundational Scripture on marriage is found in Genesis 2:24, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." The principles of "leave, cleave, and weave [become one flesh]" form the basis for any scripturally successful marriage. Providing counsel with this concept at its core may well make the difference between a couple that seeks to put God's principles first in their marriage, and one that bases their marriage on human viewpoints and worldly standards. Bible-based guidance and encouragement sowed early into a couple's life can bear much fruit.

Preparing for the sessions

We must depend upon the Word of God and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as we take up this task, for He has promised to be our Counselor and Guide. Following are several steps we can take to prepare for effective meetings with couples who are planning to marry.

Discuss the matter with fellow pastors. Those who have been pastoring for a number of years will be able to share techniques, resources, and methods that have worked for them.

Compile a resource list. There are many good books to recommend to couples who are contemplating marriage. Read through several, and make notes of what you like in each book. Some pastors have chosen a favorite, and presented it as an engagement gift to a couple at their first session. There are also Christian media presentations which may be helpful.

Do online research. Many Christian websites offer materials for Christian couples contemplating marriage. *Focus on the Family* is one such organization; there are many others.[1] You will find good materials to augment what you plan to discuss with couples. Additionally, you may decide to refer couples to a site where they can access helpful material.

Start a file. Train yourself to download or copy and file sermons related to marriage, good articles you come across, notes from other pastors, Scriptures and thoughts that come to you in your personal Bible study, and observations about weddings you attend. Eventually, this file will be a great resource.

Put together a set of goals. These may include such items as:

- Get to know the couple and help them feel comfortable communicating with you.
- Learn the testimony and assess the spiritual maturity of both individuals.
- Establish the Biblical qualifications for marriage,[2] and ensure that the marriage is in compliance with civil law.
- Explain guidelines for marriage in an Apostolic Faith Church.
- Establish Scriptural guidelines for marriage, including roles and responsibilities.
- Identify individual expectations regarding the marriage.

- Assess potential problem areas and help the couple plan strategies to cope.
- Strengthen communication skills.
- Establish personal, couple, and family goals.

Make a list of topics to cover in addressing the goals. Some suggestions are provided below, but you will want to adapt based on the needs of each individual couple. Research the Scriptural principles that apply to each topic, and note pertinent verses, remembering that our role as pastor is to present what the Bible has to say—not to provide therapeutic counsel.

Develop a set of questions to incorporate into your sessions. Some introductory questions are provided in this section, but you may wish to adapt or add to the list. Some pastors request that the couples answer the questions independently, and turn in their answers. Comparing the two sets of responses can help you know what aspects to emphasize in your sessions.

Outline the meetings. Determine how many sessions will be needed and what you will cover in each meeting. Make notes of what will be required of the couple for each session.

As we plan specific sessions, it is important to remember that we must be flexible in our approach. Couples will come to us with all levels of spiritual maturity and a variety of needs. Their personal backgrounds and life experiences will differ. Challenges that are evident and must be addressed in one case may be non-issues for the next couple we deal with. For these reasons, the length and number of sessions, the goals we attempt to reach with each couple, and the techniques or resources we use to meet those goals will vary. We should also be prepared to adapt content as our sessions progress, and concerns or potential issues arise.

Determining the number of sessions

Good premarital education cannot be packed into a one week or one day period. Time is needed for the participating individuals to process the guidelines and principles we review with them. In the Apostolic Faith organization, we typically do not marry a couple unless we have opportunity to meet with them a number of times over a period of some months. If the couple has a solid spiritual foundation and the basic principles of an effective marriage only need some reinforcement, a few sessions may be sufficient. For couples who face challenges in their relationship, or have deeper issues to contend with, the process will take longer.[3] It is unwise to permit a couple to rush through the process or eliminate it entirely unless there clearly are extenuating circumstances.[4] In such cases, we should arrange to meet with the two of them after the wedding ceremony has taken place.

Identifying topics to address

Many of the topics we take up in meeting with engaged couples will revolve around the roles, relationships, and responsibilities in a Christian marriage. Most of them should relate directly to the goals established for your sessions.

Potential topics include:

- Foundation for marriage
- Roles in marriage
- Expectations
- Values and goals
- Sexuality
- Finances
- Extended family

- Communication
- Conflict management
- Family planning
- Child rearing

Encouraging discussion through questions

The following questions should provide a springboard for discussion of some of the issues that a couple should address together. We also could consider assigning some of these questions to the couple for discussion outside of our presence.[5]

- How would you describe a good marriage?
- Why are you getting married?
- Are you committed to do everything you can to prevent divorce? In what ways will you demonstrate that commitment?
- In what ways should your prospective spouse make your marriage a priority? In what ways will you do so?
- How would you describe the husband's role in a marriage? The wife's role?
- In what ways will you commit to building a strong spiritual foundation for your marriage?
- How do you plan to manage sexual temptation before marriage?
- What three words would you choose to best describe your prospective spouse? What three words would you choose to describe yourself?
- What do you as a couple want out of life? What are your shared goals?
- Do you think you have problems in your relationship that need to be discussed before the wedding?
- What values and traditions do you expect to bring into the marriage? How will you handle differences in these?
- Do you expect or want your prospective spouse to change? If so, in what areas?
- Were you and your prospective spouse raised with similar backgrounds in such areas as culture, education, spiritual upbringing, etc? If not, how were they different? How might these differences impact your marriage?
- Do you have trust issues or feel insecure in the relationship? If so, what steps can you take to resolve these?
- What will you do if you disagree on an important spiritual or moral issue?
- Do you feel close to your prospective spouse? Can you share anything without fear or embarrassment?
- How will you decide if and when you want children? How will you resolve differences of opinion on this matter?
- How would you describe what you anticipate your parenting philosophy will be?
- What is your relationship with both sets of parents and extended families? How might this impact your marriage and raising of children?
- Was your family an affectionate one? How was that affection demonstrated?
- Presuming the husband is employed, will the wife be employed as well? Will she work while you have young children in the home?

- How will you ensure your commitment to each other remains strong, even in the face of challenges such as the death of loved ones, stress, or financial issues?
- What will you do if you have relationship problems that you cannot fix on your own? Where would you turn for help?
- Do you think you listen to each other well? What steps could you take to improve communication?
- How will financial matters be handled? How do you feel about credit, and what parameters will you establish as a couple?
- How do you think your relationship will change after you are married?

Many couples do not discuss these issues until *after* the wedding. However, we should encourage the couples we counsel with to discuss their expectations thoroughly, and as early as possible in their engagement. By talking about their personal viewpoints and perspectives early on, they will be alerted to potential pitfalls and learn how to avoid them.

In conclusion, we want to take a solidly Biblical approach to guiding couples who are approaching marriage, incorporating basic principles regarding how to build an effective marriage without drifting from our Scriptural foundation and our faith in an all-sufficient Christ. If the following principles are incorporated into the couple's marriage, they will be well-equipped to face the blessings and challenges of married life.

- Keep God first in your lives.
- Pray together.
- Love and respect each other.
- Communicate effectively.
- Make time for each other.
- Protect your marriage vows.
- Understand that love is a choice.

[1] Some possibilities are included on the list of website resources offered on the Ministers Page of our website at www.apostolicfaith.org.

[2] Refer to the section of this manual entitled *The Sanctity of Marriage* for more information on this topic.

[3] It is important for us to weigh how much time we can invest in a couple and still maintain our other personal and pastoral responsibilities. If an initial session or two reveals that a particular couple has serious issues, we may feel led to recommend that they see a professional counselor, or attend a conference designed to help engaged couples before a marriage date is set and our sessions with them resume.

[4]Examples could be military deployment, or family circumstances that necessitate a short engagement.

[5] While we want to encourage couples to communicate with each other about important matters that could affect the wellbeing of their marriage, care must be taken not to intrude on the exclusive bond between the two of them by pressing for answers that should be private.

Counsel to Ministers

At times, we may be asked to perform a wedding ceremony for a close friend or family member who lives some distance away, or for a member of our immediate family. In these cases, it may be an option to suggest that another pastor in the Apostolic Faith organization undertake the counseling of the couple.

Wedding Preliminaries and Rehearsal

At the outset of His ministry, Jesus attended and took part in the wedding at Cana of Galilee, choosing that occasion to perform His first miracle. Since Jesus considered weddings to be significant, it should be our desire to make every wedding we participate in a memorable and sacred event for the couple involved. This requires careful planning and adequate preparation. While most details will be the responsibility of the couple, we do have a role as well.

Most importantly, when we meet with couples planning to be married, we need to discuss with them the logistical details related to holding a wedding in the church. If our church has an appointed wedding coordinator, we should provide that individual's contact information to the couple at the outset of our sessions, so they can arrange a meeting with her. If there is no official church wedding coordinator, it will be our responsibility as officiating minister to acquaint the bride and groom with the requirements for use of the church facility. We should provide the couple with a list of guidelines, costs, and contact information for necessary individuals. Some of the points to cover in that list may include:

- Location of rooms to be used by the bridal party for dressing and preparation before the ceremony.
- Music guidelines and policies.
- Availability of audio visual and sound equipment and contact information for the church's sound/lighting technicians to assure proper set-up.
- Policies governing decorations, flowers, photography, rental items, and staging.
- Details regarding a reception following the wedding, if it is to be held on the church premises.
- Custodial arrangements for the church facility following the ceremony.
- Any costs/fees associated with use of the premises, equipment, or personnel.

A short time before the wedding itself, it is advisable to gather everyone involved in the ceremony for a rehearsal and walk-through. If a wedding coordinator is involved, that individual will direct the rehearsal, though it is the officiating minister's responsibility to provide instructions for the vow portion of the ceremony. If no coordinator is involved, the pastor's wife or some other qualified woman in the congregation may be asked to assist. That individual can then direct both the rehearsal and the wedding itself, as we will not be able to do so on the day of the event due to our responsibilities as the officiant. We should instruct those in the wedding party and others present at the rehearsal to address any questions to the coordinator, rather than to the bride.

We should begin the rehearsal with prayer. Typically, the coordinator then positions everyone where they will stand during the ceremony itself, rehearses the procedure for the processional and recessional, acquaints the bridal party with the order of the ceremony, gives specific instructions and assigns responsibilities to the bridal party and others involved, works through arrangements with musicians and audio/visual technicians, and then directs a walk-through of the event. The main goal is to familiarize everyone involved with what will happen so that the ceremony proceeds smoothly on the actual day of the wedding.

During the rehearsal, we stop just before the part of the ceremony where the couple would take their vows. At that point, we merely explain to the couple what will happen next, making sure when and how they should respond verbally during the actual ceremony.

The wedding rehearsal should be a pleasant adjunct to the actual wedding event. We should do our best to make the rehearsal as stress-free and smooth as possible, in keeping with the sacredness of the actual ceremony, though more relaxed.

The Wedding Ceremony

The word *wed* is derived from the ancient Greek word for *pledge*. No matter what country the wedding ceremony takes place in, and no matter what cultural traditions are involved, to "wed" is to pledge oneself to another. There are few acts we perform as ministers that are more sacred or more beautiful than solemnizing the vows a man and woman take before God and their family and friends.

In Apostolic Faith churches in the United States, the wedding ceremony itself typically follows the order given below, although the sequence can be adjusted to fit with the preference of the couple. In areas outside of the United States, weddings will likely follow at least to some degree the customs of the region. Christian weddings worldwide should always align with Biblical principles and the sacred nature of this ceremony. As officiating ministers, part of our role will be to ensure that all aspects of a wedding at which we preside are suitable and in keeping with a worship service centering on vows taken before God.

Order of the Wedding Ceremony

Thirty to forty-five minutes before the wedding begins, music is played softly by the organist or pianist. Ushers greet and seat guests as they arrive. At the scheduled time, the ceremony begins.

- Lighting of the candles (if this is part of the ceremony)
- Seating of grandparents
- Seating of parents
- Processional of wedding party:
- Pastor, groom, and groomsmen
- Bride's attendants
- Flower girl and page
- Bride (audience stands as bride enters)
- Seating of audience
- Bestowment of bride – "Who giveth this woman?"
- Ceremony from the *Minister's Manual*
    - Introductory comments
    - Vows
    - Pronouncement of marriage
- Song by soloist or vocal group
- Lighting of unity candle (optional)
- Prayer of blessing
- Kiss
- Presentation of couple to congregation
- Recessional of wedding party

Although we cannot address every potential variation in how the wedding ceremony could be structured, a few additional notes regarding may be helpful.

The minister, followed by the groom and his best man, enter and take their positions before the beginning of the wedding march. The best man always stands next to the bridegroom. The other groomsmen may follow

the groom and best man, or they may escort the bridesmaids into the sanctuary. The men should face the door where the bride's attendants and then the bride will enter.

When the wedding party has assembled at the front of the sanctuary, the wedding march or some type of musical fanfare usually indicates the entrance of the bride. The mother of the bride stands to her feet, signaling the guests present to stand as well. The bride enters the sanctuary holding the left arm of her father or other chosen relative (if she is to be given away) and moves slowly down the aisle to the front. Once they are in position, the officiating minister tells the audience, "You may be seated."

The bride and bridegroom face the minister with the groom on the right of the bride. The maid of honor stands to the bride's left, the best man to the groom's right, and the entire bridal party remains standing until the end of the ceremony. During the actual vow portion of the ceremony, often the bride and groom turn and face each other.

If the bride is to be given away, the minister addresses the father or the person chosen to bestow the bride, asking, "Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?" That individual responds, and places the bride's right hand in the right hand of the groom; he then takes a seat with the rest of the family. (If the bride is not given away, her escort may take his seat immediately after walking her to the front.) If the bride does not have an escort down the aisle, she simply steps to the side of the groom when she reaches the front of the sanctuary, and the groom takes her right hand with his right hand.

At this point in the ceremony, the minister and bride and groom may step up to the platform of the sanctuary. If there is room, they may be followed by the maid/matron-of-honor and the best man; alternatively the maid/matron of honor and best man simply stay in position with the rest of the bridal party.

The officiating minister may begin by making some personal remarks about the couple, focusing on their commitment to God and to each other. He then proceeds with the wedding ceremony, beginning with the phrase, "We are gathered here to join this couple in holy matrimony."[1]

If a unity candle is to be lit during the ceremony, the couple usually does this after the exchange of vows, while a musical number is presented by a vocalist or instrumentalist. At the completion of the candle lighting, the bride and groom resume their positions in front of the minister. When the musical number concludes, the minister prays the prayer of blessing for the new couple.

If questions of correct procedure come up, the minister or wedding coordinator can consult any reliable book on marriage etiquette for answers.

[1] See the section of this manual titled *Ceremony Wording* for the precise wording of a wedding ceremony.

Counsel for Ministers

As officiants at wedding ceremonies, we should be aware of the fact that brides and grooms are nervous. The same may be true for members of the bridal party. Fainting is not unheard of. Flowers are sometimes dropped, and vows may be misstated. Participants may forget what they are supposed to do, or do something at the wrong time. Officiating ministers need to be prepared to respond to stressful situations in a calm and professional manner. It may be advisable to give some thought ahead of time how potential emergencies would be handled. For example, you may wish to arrange with the coordinator to have a stool or chair close by in case someone is shaky. Groomsmen can be alerted to quietly assist anyone who feels faint or needs to leave the sanctuary. As the minister in charge, we should be prepared to take control of any situation of this order and quickly issue instructions in order to minimize confusion. A quiet word of greeting and assurance to the bride and groom at the altar can help them relax.

Ceremony Wording

The couple to be united in marriage faces the minister with the groom on the right of the bride.

If the bride is to be given away, the minister addresses the father or the person chosen to bestow the bride, asking, "Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?" That individual responds in the affirmative, usually saying one of three options: "I do" (if he alone is giving the bride away), "Her mother and I" (if there are two living parents), or "On behalf of her family, I do" (if he is escorting the bride as a family representative). He then places the bride's right hand in the right hand of the groom, and takes his seat.

There are two options for wedding ceremonies in Apostolic Faith churches. In option one, the bride and groom assent to their vows with "I do." In option two, the bride and groom repeat their vows.

In either case, the minister may choose to begin the ceremony with a few personal remarks focusing on the couple's commitment to God and each other. He then begins the introductory comments which precede the vows.

Introductory Comments

> *We are gathered here to join this couple in holy matrimony. Since we know that Almighty God is the author of the institution of marriage—that by His word this holy relationship between man and wife was brought into existence—we do not hesitate to proceed according to the instructions given us in His Holy Bible and in accordance with the laws of our civil state.*
>
> *Obedience to the law of God always brings blessing, even though we may be in temporal adversity and sorrow. Disobedience brings the displeasure of God, even in times of seeming prosperity and happiness. Therefore, our conduct before each other, either as husbands, wives, or unmarried individuals, must be regulated by God's law if we are to enjoy the supreme blessing of God upon our lives while we live here on earth.*
>
> *Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, also sanctioned the institution of marriage by attending and taking part in the marriage at Cana of Galilee. He further gave His approval to marriage, reminding us of some of its obligations and privileges, when He said, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh."*
>
> *The Holy Spirit has also blessed marriage, and has used its bond of love as an illustration of the much closer tie that binds the Church of Christ to its Bridegroom and Master, Jesus Christ. Speaking through the Apostle Paul and terming it one of the great mysteries of our life on earth, the Holy Spirit said, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord" and, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it . . . So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies . . . For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."*

Vows Option One: Assent by "I Do"

The minister then turns to the groom and says:

> _____ (bridegroom's full name), *do you take this woman, whose right hand you now hold, to be your lawfully wedded wife; and solemnly promise, God helping you, that you will be a true and devoted husband to her, that you will love, honor, cherish, and protect her, in sickness and in health, in sorrow and in joy, in adversity and in prosperity; and that you will keep yourself to her, and to her alone, until God by death shall separate you?*

The man will answer: "I do."

Turning to the bride, the minister says:

> _____ (bride's full name)*, do you take this man whose right hand you now hold, to be your lawfully wedded husband; and solemnly promise, God helping you, that you will be a true and devoted wife to him, that you will love, honor, cherish, and comfort him, in sickness and in health, in sorrow and in joy, in adversity and in prosperity; and that you will keep yourself to him, and to him alone, until God by death shall separate you?*

The woman will answer: "I do."

Vows Option Two: Assent by Repeating Vows

The minister turns to the groom and says:

> _____ *(*first name of bridegroom*), do you promise to keep the vows you are about to make?*

The groom will answer: "I do."

> *Please repeat after me.* (Say the vows one phrase at a time, giving the groom time to repeat each one.)
>
> *I,* _____ (groom's full name*) take you,* _____ (bride's full name*), to be my lawfully wedded wife; and solemnly promise, God helping me, that I will be a true and devoted husband to you, that I will love, honor, cherish, and protect you, in sickness and in health, in sorrow and in joy, in adversity and in prosperity; and that I will keep myself to you, and to you alone, until God by death shall separate us.*

Turning to the bride, the minister says:

> _____ (first name of bride)*, do you promise to keep the vows you are about to make?*

The bride will answer: "I do."

> *Please repeat after me.* (Say the vows one phrase at a time, giving the bride time to repeat each one.)
>
> *I,* _____ (bride's full name) *take you,* _____ (groom's full name), *to be my lawfully wedded husband; and solemnly promise, God helping me, that I will be a true and devoted wife to you, that I will love, honor, cherish, and comfort you, in sickness and in health, in sorrow and in joy, in adversity and in prosperity; and that I will keep myself to you, and to you alone, until God by death shall separate us.*

Pronouncement of Marriage

The minister then addresses everyone present, saying:

> *Inasmuch, then, as* _____ (bridegroom's full name) *and*_____ (bride's full name) *have both signified their desire to be joined together in the holy bond of matrimony, have borne witness of this fact before God and this company, and have pledged their fidelity and love each to the other, I, by the virtue of the authority vested in me as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and by the laws of the State of _____ now pronounce them husband and wife, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."*

The minister then offers a prayer invoking God's blessing upon the newly married couple.

The Wedding Reception

In the United States, a reception typically follows the wedding ceremony itself, in which the bride and groom greet their guests and accept congratulations. In Apostolic Faith weddings, the reception may be held in the church, if a suitable gathering place is available, or at another nearby location.

Receptions in our churches, though celebratory in nature, still should be appropriate for a Christian setting. If we are the pastor of the couple involved, or they are being married in the church where we pastor, we should make sure they know that since they are entering into a Christian marriage, there should be no alcohol, smoking, dancing, or inappropriate remarks at the wedding reception. Though a joyous occasion, every attempt should be made to ensure that the reception is in good taste for a group of Christians who have just taken part in a sacred ceremony.

As officiates, we should attend the wedding reception, but our official duties in terms of the event conclude with the benediction prayer at the wedding ceremony itself, unless we have been asked to participate in the reception.

The reception should be coordinated by a church-appointed wedding coordinator, hostess, or close friend of the bride. Our final remaining responsibility as officiates will be to complete the wedding license. After the wedding, we should file the necessary documents with the vital records authorities, and make copies of the documentation, giving one to the couple and keeping one for our own files.

Marriage Vow Renewal Services

A marriage vow renewal service can be a meaningful, sacred ceremony for a couple, their family, and friends. It offers a time for the couple to pause and reflect on the nature of their shared commitment, and once more pledge their lives to each other before God. Events of this nature can also be very moving for those who attend. Watching their parents join hands and hearts in an affirmation of their enduring love provides a beautiful example for the couple's children and grandchildren. As a minister, it is a privilege to take part in such a ceremony.

A vow renewal ceremony can occur any time after the original wedding ceremony. Some couples choose to plan the event on a special anniversary, such as the tenth, twenty-fifth, or fiftieth. At times, these ceremonies are held in the church, and when this is the case, many of the guidelines for wedding ceremonies would apply. However, since the couple is already married, there are several differences between a vow renewal ceremony and a wedding. Following are some of the points to consider:

- Since the ceremony is symbolic rather than legal, it is not mandatory for a minister to perform it, but asking a minister to officiate is customary in Apostolic Faith circles.
- The ceremony is not a legal event, so the couple does not need to obtain a marriage license.
- Typically, ministers in our organization slightly adjust the wording of the vows used in our traditional wedding ceremonies for a vow renewal service (see one example at the end of this section). Couples may also wish to offer personal remarks to each other, mentioning their years together and pledging their continuing commitment in the future.
- Since the bride is already married, no one should "give" her in marriage to the groom. However, an escort—perhaps a son or grandson—may walk her down the aisle.
- If the couple has children, it is appropriate for them to be included in the ceremony as attendants. Sometimes members of the original wedding party stand up with the couple as they renew their vows.
- Encourage couples *not* to use a vow renewal as an occasion to live out their fantasies of the dream wedding they did not have. Instead, the ceremony should be kept simple and sacred, with a focus on the enduring quality of Christian commitment.
- Guests will enjoy aspects that relate to the original wedding. These might include the viewing of the wedding video and/or photos, incorporating songs sung at the original wedding, or ordering a re-creation of the wedding cake.

The service itself is typically structured quite similarly to a wedding. Following is a possible way that the traditional marriage ceremony could be adapted for a vow renewal ceremony.

The couple renewing their vows, along with their attendants, should take their places before the minister. The husband stands on the minister's left and the wife on the minister's right. The minister then says:

> *We are gathered here today to witness the renewing of the vows that this couple made to one another in* ____ (year of the initial marriage ceremony) *when the two of them were united in holy matrimony. Since we know that Almighty God is the author of the institution of marriage—that by His word this holy relationship between man and wife was brought into existence—we do not hesitate to proceed in a renewal of the lifetime commitment that* _____(name of wife) *and* _____ (name of husband) *made to one another* _____*years ago.*
>
> *Obedience to the law of God always brings blessing, even though we may be in temporal adversity and sorrow. Disobedience brings the displeasure of God, even in times of seeming prosperity*

and happiness. Therefore, our conduct before each other, either as husbands, wives, or unmarried individuals, must be regulated by God's law if we are to enjoy the supreme blessing of God upon our lives while we live here on earth.

Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, also sanctioned the institution of marriage by attending and taking part in the marriage at Cana of Galilee. He further gave His approval to marriage, reminding us of some of its obligations and privileges, when He said, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh."

The Holy Spirit has also blessed marriage, and has used its bond of love as an illustration of the much closer tie that binds the Church of Christ to its Bridegroom and Master, Jesus Christ. Speaking through the Apostle Paul and terming it one of the great mysteries of our life on earth, the Holy Spirit said, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord" and, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it . . . So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies . . . For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

The minister then addresses the couple, saying:

And now, since it is your purpose to recommit to your vows of holy wedlock, you will signify this intention by joining your right hands.

The couple joins hands. Turning to the man, the minister says:

_____ (husband's full name), *do you confirm your commitment to this woman, whose right hand you now hold; and solemnly promise, God helping you, that you will be a true and devoted husband to her, that you will love, honor, cherish, and protect her, in sickness and in health, in sorrow and in joy, in adversity and in prosperity; and that you will keep yourself to her, and to her alone, until God by death shall separate you?*

The man will then answer:

I do.

Turning to the woman, the minister will then say:

_____ (wife's full name), *do you confirm your commitment to this man, whose right hand you now hold; and solemnly promise, God helping you, that you will be a true and devoted wife to him, that you will love, honor, cherish, and comfort him, in sickness and in health, in sorrow and in joy, in adversity and in prosperity; and that you will keep yourself to him, and to him alone, until God by death shall separate you?*

The woman will then answer:

I do.

The minister then addresses himself to all present and says:

Inasmuch, then, as _____ (husband's full name*) and*_____ (wife's full name) *have both signified the renewal of their commitment to the holy bond of matrimony, have borne witness of this fact before God and this company, and have once again pledged their fidelity and love each to the other, I, by the virtue of the authority vested in me as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, pronounce God's continued blessing upon them as husband and wife, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Let us pray.*

The minister then offers a prayer invoking God's blessing upon the couple and closes with a benediction upon all present.

A vow renewal ceremony is a wonderful way to reaffirm a couple's love and commitment to each other before family and friends. The ceremony not only can strengthen the marriage bonds, but it also is a testimony and example of the enduring blessing of marriage vows taken before God.

Support of the Separated or Divorced

Divorce was never part of God's plan.[1] However, believers are not immune to marriage problems, and there are times when a Christian's marriage ends despite his or her attempts to avoid that outcome.[2] For that reason, in all likelihood there will be individuals in our congregations who are no longer living as married people because they have been separated or divorced from their spouse.[3]

As ministers of the Gospel, we have a responsibility toward these individuals. Our first goal would be to reconcile the divorced or separated couple if possible.[4] If reconciliation is not achieved, we should assure them that while relationships and circumstances within their family have changed, God's love toward them is ever present and does not end. The pain which results from the loss of a relationship is great and deep-seated, and the individual may also be dealing with resentment, guilt, and depression. In addition, like a widowed person, a divorced man or woman often must make financial, housing, and employment adjustments. We should do our best to offer support and encouragement to those who face these challenges, especially as they work through the initial adjustment period.

In reality, the dissolution of a marriage impacts more than just the two individuals. Like pebbles tossed into a still pond, the ripples are far-reaching. If there were children, they will need to adjust to living in the home without one of their parents. Parents, siblings, and even friends of the couple will all be affected. They all need support and care, and as pastors, our compassion must reach out and encompass them.

While we do not organize special support groups for divorcees within our church, we must lead the way in ministering to divorce-linked grief, and encourage the family of God to join us in providing a safe, loving, and supportive environment for those going through it. Caring pastors and committed laypeople alike are called to respond to the challenge, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2). The author of the Book of Romans put it this way: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Romans 15:1). While the devastation of divorce is very real, the loving, practical care of God's people can go a long way toward mitigating the pain and encouraging the individuals who experience it.

As pastors, we must prepare ourselves to respond Biblically to the questions that one suffering as a result of a broken marriage may ask, such as: Where is God in all of this? Does He still care about me? I took my vows seriously, so why has this happened? How can I teach and support my children when I feel so hurt and abandoned? How can I get over the resentment and forgive my spouse?

As we minister to divorced people, there are steps we can suggest that will help them adjust to their new circumstances and access the help of the Lord.

- *Make a decision-based response.* Whatever has happened, has happened, but how we respond to it is what will make the difference. If we decide to handle our grief and make the necessary adjustments according to the principles outlined in God's Word, He will be there to help us.
- *Let go of the past.* God's grace can help us look forward instead of backward, for where we are going is more important than where we have been. Paul the Apostle spoke of "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before," and that can be our purpose as well.
- *Revise assumptions.* It is easy to think that this should never have happened, because we are Christians. However, Scripture lets us know that even the good suffer. We are not immune to challenges and difficult circumstances in life just because we serve the Lord.
- *Adjust to new realities.* The Psalmist asked, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" Divorce does necessitate entering a "new land," and it will be different than the old one, but God will still be there.

- *Resist temptation.* Take great care not to attempt to fill the undeniable void with a substitute relationship that is outside of the boundaries prescribed by Scripture.
- *Be thankful.* Paul admonished the believers at Thessalonica, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). As we challenge ourselves to find things we are grateful for each day, we will find more and more blessings for which to be thankful, in spite of the difficulties we face.
- *Reach out to others.* Serving others will help us start to rebuild and heal. In 2 Corinthians 1:4 we read that the God of all comfort "comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." God's unconditional love to us gives us something to offer others who hurt.

Our role as pastors and ministers is to point those who are grappling with the dissolution of their marriage to the comfort found in God. He loves them with a love that will never let them go, and has promised to provide all that they need to fulfill His purposes for them. In response to God's unending love, they can surrender their pain to Him, and ask Him to make their lives richer and fuller for Him as a result of what they are going through.

[1] See the section of this manual titled *The Sanctity of Marriage* for more on this topic.

[2] While divorce is not God's intention for marriage, there are situations where legal separation may be advisable for protection. Some examples of such cases include:

- There have been incidents of physical abuse toward the spouse.
- The children of the marriage have been physically, emotionally, or sexually abused.
- The spouse is engaged in an ongoing adulterous relationship.
- Illegal activities are going on in the home.

[3] Scripture is clear that when a believer has been divorced, that one must remain single and celibate as long as their spouse lives, or else be reconciled. However, today's religious world is moving farther and farther away from this Biblical position. As recently as the middle of the twentieth century, adherence to the Scriptures on this subject was quite universal. In spite of the trend of our day to allow remarriage of divorced individuals, we must uphold the teachings of God's Word, which establishes that marriage is a lifelong contract. Paul's statement to the church in Corinth, "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases" (1 Corinthians 7:15) does not free one from the marriage vow; the Apostle was simply saying that the believer was not obligated to sustain the marriage if an unbelieving spouse was determined to leave. Further on in the same chapter, he states, "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord (1 Corinthians 7:39). Luke 16:18 clearly indicates that remarriage after divorce is adultery: "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery."

[4] We should be aware that the Christian partner is not obligated to reconcile with a spouse who is violent or abusive, or the circumstances described in footnote two are present.

Funerals and Memorial Services

General Instructions for Funerals

As ministers of the Gospel, one of our responsibilities and privileges is to assist families who have lost a loved one. Death can be a cataclysmic event in a home, so our role may go far beyond simply officiating at the funeral service. We should also reach out with comfort and encouragement to the living in their time of sorrow.[1]

The needs of the family must be of utmost importance to us when a death occurs. If the deceased was a member of our congregation, we will find our support in a time of mourning will draw us closer to the family. If we were not well acquainted with the individual who passed away, but are contacted by a family member to assist with the funeral, we have a rare opportunity to share the comfort of God with people in grief.

Arranging the funeral service

There are a number of steps we will need to take when members of our congregation or someone close to them passes away. We should contact the family as soon as possible after the news of a death. If a short visit is possible, it will provide us with an opportunity to personally express our sympathy, pray with those who are grieving, and perhaps read a Scripture that will bring solace.

Subsequent to that initial visit, we should make an appointment to meet with the family member(s) who will be making the funeral arrangements, to learn the family's needs and wishes. There will be many details to be decided at this point. Even though funeral services follow a somewhat typical pattern in Apostolic Faith churches, the requests of each family and what they want to be included in the program will be unique. Points to be addressed at this second meeting will include:

- Obituary information regarding the deceased.
- Where and when the funeral service will be held.
- Who they wish to have participate in the service.
- Special thoughts, presentations, or tributes they wish to have included.
- Preferences related to music in the service.
- Committal arrangements.
- Other ways we can assist them.

The ability to focus on funeral service details may be a challenge for grieving family members, and it can be a great help to those in sorrow if we guide them through some of the necessary decisions. One way we can do this is to come to the meeting prepared with some questions in our minds that will help us obtain the information we need. We should encourage the family not only to inform us of facts related to the individual, but also to share their memories and reminisce about the deceased. This will help us glean the type of material we need to speak effectively and personally about the person at the funeral service. Guide the family to share information regarding the following topics.

Information about the individual's personal history.

- Where and when was he/she born?
- What were the parents' names?
- What should be mentioned regarding education, work history, and achievements?

- Who are the survivors? (Obtain names of spouse, children, grandchildren, and siblings)
- What were the highlights of his or her life?
- In what areas did the deceased serve in the church?
- What will the deceased be remembered for? (This could include personality traits, hobbies, favorite pastimes, relationships with others, etc.)
- What stories or incidents reflect the person's character and life?

Arrangements for the funeral service.

- What funeral chapel or director do they plan to use?
- Where and when will the service be held?
- Will family members speak during the service? Alternatively, would they like to compose a tribute that can be read?
- Are there any particular memories or tributes they wish to have shared?
- Will any type of media presentation be included in the funeral?
- Are there poems, stories, favorite Bible verses, or other readings they would like to have shared?
- Does the family have a preference as to who will sing or play?
- Are there any special songs or music they would like to include?
- Is there a charity or an area of the church work the family would recommend to mourners in lieu of flowers?

Arrangements for the committal.

- Will the service conclude at the chapel/church or will the interment be open to the public? Will a funeral home or representative of the family announce this, is it on the program, or should the minister announce it?
- Will there be a procession to the cemetery?
- Who will be the pallbearers?
- What is the location of the cemetery they plan to use?
- Will there be music at the graveside?
- Will there be any form of military honors such as a flag presentation, or rifle salute? If so, who will receive the flag?

In addition to obtaining the specific information we need, we should listen for casual remarks and anecdotal memories, meaningful stories, or incidents that reflect the nature and character of the deceased. In particular it is good to be alert for recollections that bring a smile. We can prompt the family's contemplations by reminding them, "This service is for you. You need the opportunity to remember your loved one. If you have stories, songs, Scripture verses, or poems that are especially meaningful, feel free to share them with me."

If the family needs help in arranging the order of the funeral service, we should offer to assist in that regard. Remember, there is no absolute right or wrong when it comes to the family's requests. Once the order of the service is established, the information should be distributed to the organist and vocalists who will participate, the audio/visual crew who will be assisting with that aspect of the service, and any family members or others who will be participating in the funeral.

The funeral service itself should be personal in nature. As officiating minister, we should mention the deceased and those who have suffered loss by name. The service should be dignified but not formal, and should

acknowledge, express, and sympathize with the feelings of those present. It is appropriate for us to speak gently and comfortably about death and the natural sadness it brings, doing our best to put into words not only feelings of loss, but of gratitude for the privilege of knowing the deceased. Our words should encourage those who are grieving to view death in the context of God's eternal purposes.

There are several other responsibilities we may need to assume in conjunction with the funeral.

Preparing the Obituary

The obituary is a brief biographical account of the deceased. It typically includes the full name of the individual, the place and date of birth, and place and date of death. It may also provide the names of the parents and siblings, where the individual attended school and the level of education and/or degrees held, professional and career accomplishments, and military service. If the person was married, it should mention the spouse's name, when the marriage took place, and names of children. The obituary generally concludes with a list of surviving family members. In Apostolic Faith circles, the obituary often also includes a mention of when the individual was saved and/or became affiliated with the church, and any particular roles they held within the church organization.

Preparing a Eulogy

A eulogy is a memorial tribute to the life lived by the deceased. Typically, it refers to aspects of the person's life such as significant life accomplishments, character qualities, Christian service, and how the individual affected other lives. Many times it will be part of our responsibility as the officiating minister to deliver the eulogy, although at times a family member or close friend will choose to do so. If someone in the family does offer a tribute, it is still acceptable for us to share personal thoughts or memories, perhaps as a preface to or part of the funeral message. If a printed copy of the individual's testimony is available, that can also be a resource with regard to the deceased's walk with the Lord.

In making personal comments about the deceased, we should always be careful, honest, and kind in what we say. All people have some redeeming qualities and these should be shared in the service. While it is appropriate to focus on the positive, we must be sure that all comments we make are truthful and deserved; those who were close to the individual will quickly become aware if we portray the person in an unrealistic manner or unduly glorify the deceased.

Preparing the Funeral Message

A funeral service presents us with an opportunity to reach those who seldom, if ever, attend church services. In preparing the message, we will want to choose our Scripture carefully and not read too many verses.[2] Our sermon should be straightforward and presented in simple language, as those in attendance may have little or no knowledge of the Bible. In addition, they may be too focused on their grief to take in a complicated exposition of a text.

In the funeral message we can address what the Christian faith has to say about "the sting of death" (1 Corinthians 15:56). We will find it helpful to study the message of the Apostle Paul, who wrote to his friends at Thessalonica, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13). While we always want to speak words of comfort to the family in a funeral service, our most important goal will be to declare the ultimate hope divinely given in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

If the deceased was a true child of God, it is well to call attention to that fact and emphasize how it pays at the end of this life to have been a Christian. If the deceased was unsaved, there need be no personal reference at all. Of course, there should be no pronunciation of judgment, but there should be a plain declaration of the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. If we did not know the person well, we must guard against making any assumptions regarding his or her spiritual state. While we want to bring comfort to the grieving family,

we should not imply the person is in Heaven if we are not sure that the individual had a personal relationship with God.

In conclusion, there are several final points to consider in officiating at a funeral.

- *The funeral director.* Prior to the funeral, introduce yourself to the funeral director. He or she should be made aware of the order of the service, any particular wishes of the family, and any expectations of him (such as an announcement of the committal plans, etc.)
- *Placement of casket.* Typically, the casket is in place at the front of the sanctuary before the funeral service begins. In the case of a memorial service or a closed casket service, a framed photo of the deceased is often placed in front of the pulpit in the chapel.
- *Music during the service.* It is soothing to those in attendance if suitable music is softly played in the sanctuary or chapel as the funeral attendees gather. After the mourners are seated, the music is faded out and the service proceeds. The vocal numbers sung during the service are usually the favorites of the departed or of the family.
- *Memory display.* We often provide a table where the family can place special remembrances, photographs, and other memorabilia for viewing before and after the service. When we make funeral plans with the family, we should ask if there are items they would like to display. Possibly a family friend could help with the arrangement of these items if help is needed
- *Funeral program handout.* Often the funeral home provides memory folders for those attending the funeral service. At times, family or friends of the deceased prefer to make their own. This can be as simple as a picture of the loved one with their birth and death dates, the order of service, and a cherished Bible verse, but they can also include a portion of the individual's personal testimony or a biographical sketch.
- *Length of service.* Typically, Apostolic Faith funerals last between 30-60 minutes.[3] Time should be allowed either before or after the service for the family to greet those who attended if they so desire. The family should be given an opportunity for some final moments alone with the deceased and each other, after the other attendees have left the chapel. It is customary for the officiating minister to conclude this time with a brief prayer.
- *After the service.* Often in Apostolic Faith circles the church family provides light refreshments for the family of the deceased following the funeral service. This can precede or follow the cemetery interment, depending upon the time of day and preference of the family.

[1] For assistance in how to comfort those who have been bereaved, see the section of this manual titled *The Ministry of Comfort.*

[2] For a list of Scriptures suitable for funerals, see the section of this manual titled *Selected Scriptures for Comfort and Reassurance.*

[3] The length of time for a funeral service is flexible and may depend somewhat on what the family wishes to have included in the service. Our main role as officiating ministers is to be sure the schedule for interment and family gathering following the funeral is maintained. If family comments or other aspects of the funeral extend longer than planned, we may need to condense our concluding remarks somewhat.

Counsel for Ministers

It is not our practice to charge a fee for conducting a funeral service. In some instances, the minister is given an "honorarium," for his/her services. The amount of such honorariums varies. It is a matter of personal choice whether you keep the honorarium; in some cases, our ministers simply donate it to a cause or branch of the church work that the deceased was involved in.

Cultural traditions surrounding funerals will vary from location to location. The ethnicity of the deceased dictates to some degree how we carry out the custom of memorializing the dead. We should be careful to adapt our services to expectations in the region where the service is being held, as long as the accepted cultural practices do not conflict with Biblical principles or Christian behavior.

With the rising cost of funeral expenses today, many people in the United Sates are choosing cremation instead of burial. Christians, however, often have concerns about cremation. There is no specific teaching in the Bible about cremation, so the decision must be made by the surviving family. We should support them in whatever they choose.

It may be prudent for pastors to look into services and costs of local funeral homes shortly after moving into a new location. In some areas, there are funeral homes or associations for seniors that will substantially reduce the cost of committal. Some of the big-box or warehouse club stores sell caskets at a greatly reduced price. If the family asks for guidance in this matter, or has financial concerns about burial costs, it may be helpful to be prepared in advance with information about what is available in the area.

Specific Types of Funerals

As pastors and ministers, it will be helpful for us to be aware of the following considerations for specific types of funerals.

Graveside Service

The graveside service should be brief, unless it is the only funeral service being held for the deceased. The condition of the family, the weather, cemetery schedule, timing for a family gathering following the interment, and various other factors all must be considered when determining what is appropriate at the cemetery. As officiating pastor, we may need to guide the family in making these decisions.

If the interment follows a funeral service, as the officiating minister we should stand by as the pallbearers transfer the casket to the hearse for transport to the final resting place. At the burial site, we lead the way to the area where the committal will take place, and stand at the head of the casket. After the family and friends gather, the funeral director typically indicates when it is time to begin. We usually read a passage of Scripture such as the 23rd Psalm or 1 Corinthians 15:51-58. Infrequently, a song can be sung, either by a soloist or by all who have gathered.

If the deceased was an armed forces veteran, a representative of the branch of the service in which he or she served may be present and guide in a military salute. If the casket is draped with a flag, armed forces representatives remove the flag, fold it in the traditional manner, and present it to the family.

Depending upon the wishes of the family, the pallbearers may walk past the coffin and place on it the flowers they had worn on their lapels. We then close the committal service with prayer, commending the bereaved to the comfort and care of the Lord. We may wish to announce, "This concludes our service," after the prayer. It is a thoughtful gesture to speak with the family members and share a few personal words of comfort; this will also serve as a signal to others who have attended the committal that they may greet the family at that time.

If the only service being held takes place at the cemetery, it is appropriate to expand the ceremony at the graveside, perhaps including a song and a few brief personal comments before the committal.

Memorial Service

In the Apostolic Faith, memorial services follow much the same pattern as a traditional funeral service. The basic difference is that there is no body present. A memorial service may take place a few days after the death of a loved one, or even weeks later. It may be less expensive than a traditional funeral, as there is no need for the embalming process if the burial takes place quickly. If the family asks for guidance, the minister can bring up this option, but care must be taken not to intimate that either type of service is better. The family must be allowed to make the decision without any pressure, or they may regret it later.

Funeral for the unsaved

There are times when we are called upon to officiate at the funeral of those who were not known to be saved. There are also times when we are not really sure about the spiritual status of the deceased prior to death. The truth must not be avoided, but at the same time we should not make remarks that would wound the feelings of friends and relatives. Under these circumstances, it is usually best to avoid personal allusions and simply to present Scriptural truth in a manner that will be an encouragement and edification to those present.

Funeral for a stillborn baby

Psalm 139:13-16 is an especially appropriate text to use at a funeral for a stillborn infant, for it assures us that God is mindful of an unborn child from the time of conception. Other appropriate Scriptures for use in

this circumstance are 2 Samuel 12:15-23 (read only the second part of verse 23 because the account is really about God's punishment for David's sin with Bathsheba); and Matthew 11:25-30.

Though the stillborn infant never drew a breath outside of its mother's womb, he or she was undoubtedly planned for, loved, and nurtured in the hearts of its parents for months. A mother forms a relationship and bonds with her baby long before the birth. She begins to love the child even though she has never physically seen or touched the infant. The parents' loss is very real, and extreme care must be taken not to minimize that loss in any way.

We believe that Christian parents can look forward to the day when they will be reunited in Heaven with their child, even though they never had the opportunity to get acquainted on this earth. The Bible identifies those in the womb as "children,"[1] and indicates that "Children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward" (Psalm 127:3).

The question of whether or not to hold a funeral for a stillborn child depends upon the personal preference of the parents. If the loss occurred early in the pregnancy, it is not customary to hold a funeral. If the child was nearly to term, and a service is held, our main role at such a time would be to offer words of comfort and solace to the grieving parents. We would remind them to turn their pain over to the great Healer, whose love will help to mend their broken hearts.

Funeral for a young child

There are perhaps few things in life more devastating than the death of a child. When death separates us from a loved one, we experience a gamut of emotions: numbness, denial, grief, and finally acceptance.[2] Many of these emotions will be magnified when the deceased is a child, because we naturally expect children to outlive their parents. For this reason, planning a funeral for a child is a tremendously difficult task for a family. When we are called upon to assist those facing this situation, we must be prepared to walk them gently and compassionately through the necessary decisions.

It may be helpful to avoid the word "funeral" and instead, focus on the thought of a celebration of the child's life. It will be easier if the music is not sad and melancholy but rather, Sunday school songs or songs about Jesus' love for the children. Remember, the funeral is the family's opportunity to say their last goodbye to their child. As such, it is important that they are able to plan the service in a way that feels appropriate to them in terms of their family customs and traditions, even if it departs a bit from the order of a typical funeral service.

If there are other children in the family who are old enough to understand, it can help them if they are included. You may wish to suggest that they be offered an opportunity to speak, or read a letter or a poem to their brother or sister. In some cases, it is good to encourage siblings to draw a picture or write a letter and allow them to place it in the casket with their sibling. Also, choosing a special toy or memorial item from home is helpful. Older siblings may want to help carry the casket at the cemetery.

Perhaps the greatest comfort we can offer the family is that their little one will be waiting for them in Heaven. Scripture teaches that children are loved by God, and we believe that until they come to an age of understanding (some call it "the age of accountability"), they have a place in the kingdom of God at death. This means that if a child dies before developing to a point where the knowledge of Christ can be understood and applied through forgiveness, his or her spirit is with God. The little one inherits eternal life in Heaven and will forever enjoy the blessings of God's kingdom.

In your closing prayer, commend the grieving family to the healing embrace of God's love. We know that God sympathizes with their sorrow, for He too suffered the loss of His Son. God did not promise that our lives would be easy or free of sorrow, but He did promise that He will never leave us nor forsake us, and that we can turn our burdens over to Him.

Funeral for one who committed suicide

Holding the funeral service for an individual who committed suicide is challenging for a Christian pastor. Ordinarily, Christians find comfort after the death of those we love in our belief that their sufferings are over and eternal life is theirs. While we want to extend sympathy and comfort to those left behind, when suicide was the cause of death, we cannot offer false hope, or state that the deceased will be awaiting them in Heaven.

We should also keep in mind that the survivors of a person who committed suicide often suffer feelings of guilt as well as sorrow, feeling that they should have been aware of the person's mental or emotional state and done something to forestall the tragedy. It is also natural for them to feel anger at the deceased for their actions. We will want to take care to phrase our comments carefully, taking these emotions into account as we plan our funeral message, and avoid passing judgment or providing simplistic explanations of the suicide.

Our goal should be to encourage those who grieve to bring their grief, pain, and confusion to the One who said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:28-29). We can ask God to take the burden from their hearts and give in its place the "rest" for their souls that Christ spoke of. Another appropriate Scripture is Psalm 46:1, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." We can point those who are left behind to the shelter of God's healing love, where they can pour out their grief, release their anger, and face their emptiness knowing that God cares.

[1] See Genesis 25:22; 38:27; Ecclesiastes 11:5; and Luke 1:36,44.

[2] For more on how to comfort those who have suffered loss, see the section of this manual titled *The Ministry of Comfort.*

Selected Scriptures for Comfort and Reassurance

In reaching out with comfort to those who are sorrowing, we should depend to a great extent upon the Word of God. Following are some passages which can be used in a funeral service or in ministering to the bereaved.

Psalm 23:1-6—The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Psalm 31:1-3—In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness. Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me. For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.

Psalm 46:1-3—God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

Psalm 73:24-26, 28—Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. . . . But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.

Psalm 103:13-17—Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children.

Psalm 138:3, 7-8—In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul. . . . Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me. The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.

Psalm 147:3—He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-4—To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

Isaiah 26:3-4—Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:

Isaiah 30:15— For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.

Isaiah 40:28-31—Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their

strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Isaiah 43:1-3—But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

Isaiah 58:8-9—Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward. Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

Lamentations 3:21-23—This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.

Matthew 5:4— Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

John 14:1-3—Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

John 14:27—Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Romans 8:16-18—The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

1 Corinthians 15:51-58—Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

2 Corinthians 1:3-5—Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:17-18—For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

2 Corinthians 5:1—For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 Corinthians 12:9—And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect

in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Ephesians 3:14-21—For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Philippians 4:6-7—Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17—But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and 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.

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17—Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

1 Peter 1:3-9—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

1 Peter 4:12-13—Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

Revelation 21:1-7—And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

Revelation 22:1-5—And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

About the Organization

Our Foundation

To understand the Apostolic Faith organization, it is necessary to examine our foundation. We trace our heritage back to the holiness movement of the late 1800s which emphasized entire sanctification as a second, definite, instantaneous experience subsequent to justification. It was upon godly individuals of that background that God poured out the Pentecostal experience of the baptism of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in another language.[1] The Holy Ghost outpouring in the city of Los Angeles, California, in April of 1906 came to be known as the Azusa Revival. What God accomplished in that group of saved and sanctified people laid the foundation for what we continue to stand for today.

This was the starting point for the establishment of the Apostolic Faith work, as Florence Crawford, our founder, was among those who went to the humble mission on Azusa Street seeking for more of God. There she received her sanctification and, just a few days later, the baptism of the Holy Ghost. From that time on, her burning desire was to spread the message that the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit was available for believers who had been sanctified. Along with the other leaders on Azusa Street, she taught that sanctification was not only a second, definite, and instantaneous experience, but also a consecrated way of life which demanded carefulness with regard to conduct and appearance.

Florence Crawford soon felt God's call to take the message to other areas. At the end of December in 1906, she preached at a series of meetings in Portland, Oregon, in an old blacksmith shop which had been converted into a mission hall. God blessed those services, and in time, the pastor of the group offered to turn his church over to Florence Crawford. God's plan was unmistakable, and in 1908, she moved to Portland to establish the headquarters for the Apostolic Faith work. At that point, the Azusa Street ministry turned over two of the copies of the publication mailing list, and transferred to her the responsibility of publishing *The Apostolic Faith* paper. Just over one year later, on October 12, 1909, the Apostolic Faith organization was registered with the State of Oregon.[2]

Our founder's purpose in establishing this holiness organization was to maintain and teach all the doctrines as taught by Christ and by His Apostles, and to spread the Latter Rain Gospel to every land.[3] Although not all of the religious organizations that sprang from the Azusa Revival have upheld the original doctrinal position of those who received the Holy Ghost at that time, we strive to continually emphasize what was taught in April of 1906. We value our roots in that Azusa Street movement, but even more importantly, we value our Biblical roots. Our foundation is the Word of God, although the Azusa Revival provided the framework for what we are today.

Our vision for the future is rooted in our heritage. We cannot separate where we are going from where we have been. We are committed to upholding the doctrines of the Word of God and passing on to the next generation the Gospel that was delivered into our hands.

[1] See Joel 2:23, 28-29.

[2] The history book of our organization, titled *The Apostolic Faith – History, Doctrine, and Purpose* offers a more complete account of our historical roots.

[3] For more detailed information on the doctrinal position of the Apostolic Faith organization, see the section of this manual titled *Doctrines of the Holy Scriptures*.

Our Mission

The mission of the Apostolic Faith organization has always been evangelism: endeavoring to present the Gospel in its fullness and to lead unbelievers to God. In addition, there is a focus on encouraging the development of holy, Christ-like character in the lives of Spirit-filled believers.

Just as God has an individual call for each of His followers, we believe He also has a specific role for organizations in the general mandate Jesus delivered to His disciples, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). The mission statement of the Apostolic Faith organization attempts to express in words the purpose that has been in place since the organization's founding. It provides both a corporate and individual challenge, and establishes goals for our branch churches around the world as well as for the headquarters church. It reads:

> *The mission of the Apostolic Faith Church is to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We accomplish this as we:*
>
> *Pray – We make prayer the basis of every ministry and encourage communion with God as the way we grow to spiritual maturity in Him.*
>
> *Preach – We emphasize the original Pentecostal doctrines of salvation, sanctification, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, continually striving to develop fully committed disciples of Jesus Christ.*
>
> *Publish – We publish the Gospel through the printed word, the spoken word, and through our personal lives, daily looking for opportunities to spread the message, "Ye must be born again."*

Daniel 12:3 says, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." God chose men and women as his tools to spread the greatest news the world has ever known. He designed the message of the Gospel to be handed from person to person.

Paul the Apostle instructed Timothy, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust" (1Timothy 6:20). He was directing the younger minister to preserve a pure Gospel by preaching healthy doctrine. That charge was delivered to Timothy so that he would deliver it to others, and that same charge is ours today. A Gospel which proclaims God's power to save the repentant heart, sanctify the converted soul, and pour out the Holy Spirit on sanctified believers has been committed to our trust. It is our mission to preserve and pass it on to those who follow us.

Our Name

Jude wrote to Early Church believers, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 1:3). While "the faith" Jude mentioned certainly includes believing faith, it is far more encompassing. The faith includes the entire scope of Biblical doctrine—every teaching and practice the apostles and other writers of Scripture were inspired to write and teach.

The name of our church, "The Apostolic Faith," refers to the faith which was expounded and practiced by the apostles. However, the phrase was used before Florence Crawford came to Portland to establish this work, and even before she arrived at the Azusa Street revival where she experienced entire sanctification and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It had been in use for a number of years by religious groups who were striving to experience and revive teachings that reflected the faith of the apostles.

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, prayers were ascending in different parts of the world for a spiritual quickening similar to the one which had occurred recently in Wales. In searching the Scriptures, many found promises concerning the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that was to take place in the latter days, and began to pray for the fulfillment of those promises. Among those seekers was a man named Charles Parham, who is viewed historically by evangelicals as the father of the modern Pentecostal movement, and the first one who used the term, "the apostolic faith."

Parham believed that those who had been converted and had received what they referred to as the "second blessing" or sanctification, as taught by John Wesley and holiness organizations, should seek "a baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire." In 1898, Parham established his headquarters in Topeka, Kansas, where he operated a mission and an office. In 1899 he began printing a magazine he called "The Apostolic Faith" for the purpose of proclaiming the teachings for which he stood.

In October of 1900, Parham opened the Bethel Bible College in Topeka and assigned his students to study the doctrines of the Bible. They started with repentance, justification by faith, restitution, and entire sanctification. As the Christmas season approached, Parham had plans to leave for a few weeks, and he left his students with instructions to study the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Upon his return, they were to give him their conclusion as to whether or not God would still pour out that Pentecostal experience, accompanied by the Biblical evidence of speaking in tongues.

On New Year's Eve of 1900, shortly after midnight, a young woman student by the name of Agnes Osman was lost in prayer when the power of the Holy Ghost descended and she found herself speaking in a language she had never learned. Soon others also received what they called "Pentecost." When Parham returned, they told him that they not only believed in the experience, they had experienced it themselves. Soon after, Parham himself and several of his other students also received the Holy Spirit. In fact, on January 22, 1901, the local newspaper, the Kansas City Journal, had a headline which read, "Apostolic Faith Believers Claim the Gift of Tongues."

Before long, Parham closed his school and began to evangelize in the Midwest. He did not want to be a denomination; he had left the Methodist Church because he felt like they had departed from the holiness teachings that they had previously embraced under their founder, John Wesley. His self-described motive was to restore the teachings of the apostles—the apostolic faith—so he called his group by that name.

Between 1901 and 1905 he gained some converts, and they began traveling from town to town in "bands" proclaiming the "apostolic faith." The Original Apostolic Faith Movement archives relate, "Although the original Apostolic Faith movement as established by Charles F. Parham in 1901 has never been officially recognized as an organized body due to Parham's rejection of organizational structure, it was the first Pentecostal coalition of ministers and churches to maintain a common faith-based theology, holding to tenants of

faith centered around the baptism of the Holy Ghost with the biblical evidence of speaking in other tongues as the initial sign of Spirit baptism."

Parham moved to Houston in 1905, where he started "The Apostolic Faith Mission." At the end of that year, Parham was contacted by a black man named William Seymour. Because of the racial divide which existed in society at that time, Seymour could not enter the classroom, but he sat outside the door. He listened and heard and believed the Pentecostal message.

A short time later, Seymour was invited to Los Angeles to speak at a church. He took Acts 2:4 for his text, preaching about the baptism of the Holy Ghost. His message was not received in that holiness church—in fact, they padlocked the doors of the building so Seymour could not re-enter. He ended up in prayer meetings at 214 Bonnie Brae Street. On the last day of March in 1906, the group embarked upon a ten-day prayer meeting based on the fact that the disciples had tarried for ten days preceding the Day of Pentecost, and these believers wanted to practice it just that way.

God honored their prayers. On day ten, April 9, 1906, the Holy Ghost descended and a number of sanctified individuals received that experience. Shortly thereafter, the group moved to Azusa Street because they had outgrown the Bonnie Brae Street location. It was there that Seymour himself received the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

When Florence Crawford went to Azusa Street to investigate what was happening there, the name "Apostolic Faith" was being used. The verse, "Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" had been taken as a motto because that had been the motto of the group in Houston, Texas. Within a week or so she experienced sanctification and a week later, was baptized with the Holy Ghost.

Florence Crawford entered wholeheartedly into the efforts on Azusa Street. Many inquiries were coming in from people who wanted to know more about the Pentecostal outpouring, so she and a woman named Clara Lum began reporting what was being said and done in the meetings in a newspaper publication called "The Apostolic Faith." At the end of 1906, Florence Crawford came to Portland, Oregon with the Pentecostal message. The pastor of the church she visited offered her his pulpit permanently, and in 1908, she moved to Portland. In time, legal requirements necessitated that the group organize and incorporate, and "The Apostolic Faith Mission of Portland, Oregon" was adopted as the formal name of our organization.

We are challenged when we consider that "The Apostolic Faith" refers to the faith of the apostles, and motivated when we consider the history of our name. We do not want to drift away from the apostolic faith. May God help us to embrace the challenge and live up to the standard set forth by the teachings on which our name is based.

Our Logo

A company's logo should portray the true identity of the business, and our identity in the Apostolic Faith organization has always been to draw attention to Jesus Christ. For that reason, the design of our corporate logo is based on Jesus' words found in John 12:32: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." It features a phrase that has been with the Apostolic Faith work since its inception, "Jesus the Light of the World."

This phrase was initially displayed in 1917 as an electric sign on the first Portland headquarters church building at Front and Burnside. When the headquarters church was relocated to Northwest Sixth and Burnside in 1922, the same message was placed on top of the new building, where its dominant position at the heart of downtown Portland for over sixty years made it a well-known landmark. In 1921, when the tabernacle on the newly-obtained campground was constructed, the same words were placed there. People familiar with Southeast Portland recognize the big domed building with the words, "Jesus the Light of the World."

Over the years, we have used a number of different ways to illustrate this phrase. As years have come and gone, branch churches in many locations have chosen to display the same heartwarming message. Today, on six of the world's seven continents, Apostolic Faith churches display the words of the corporate logo.

It is also featured on much of the Gospel literature produced by our organization, having first appeared in one of our print publications about 1918, in the paper *The Apostolic Faith.* It appears on nearly every page of the corporate website, and branch churches are encouraged to incorporate the logo into their local church promotions.[1]

[1] Different image formats may be required for use on lettterhead, banners, signs, and vans, so multiple versions of the logo are available on the Ministers Resource page of our website. Options include the image with and without a background, and in color, black and white, and line-drawing styles.

Our Motto

In the early days of the Azusa revival, leaders of the movement took the Bible verse Jude 3 for a motto: "Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." The word *faith* in this verse referred to the set of beliefs, doctrines, and practices once delivered to the saints. The word *delivered* has the sense of something transmitted or handed down, accompanied by a charge for the recipient to be the custodian of it—to manage it and to treat it properly.

It is not hard to understand why Jude 3 was chosen as a motto. The outpouring of the Holy Ghost on saved and sanctified individuals at Azusa Street rapidly attracted attention from the secular media. Faced with persecution and ridicule, those who had received the Pentecostal experience soon understood the necessity of contending. Something precious had been entrusted to them, and they realized that Jude was encouraging whatever struggle was necessary to defend the faith. The Gospel message preached by the Apostles of the Early Church must not be eradicated by criticism or compromised by false teachers. As recipients, it was their responsibility to uphold the message and see that it was transmitted to others.

The workers putting together reports at the revival epicenter decided to feature this verse on their first publication that carried abroad the news of the Pentecostal outpouring. When Florence Crawford came to Portland, she kept the verse on the papers printed at the new location; this verse has appeared on every issue of the flagship publication of the Apostolic Faith organization. Jude 3 is also inscribed on the cornerstone of the headquarters church in Portland, Oregon, along with the words, "Founded 1906" and "Built 1983."

As ministers, we have accepted a charge to uphold the Gospel. We have been commissioned by God to proclaim this faith without fear or compromise, and to hand on to the next generation what was delivered to us.

Denominational Characteristics

The Apostolic Faith organization has a number of denominational characteristics which set us apart from the majority of religious organizations in the world today.[1] We are not ecumenical in our practice because we choose not to identify ourselves with those who hold differing positions on what we consider to be key aspects of our walk with God.

One of the most significant distinguishing characteristics between us and other Christian denominations is our doctrinal position.[2] Our beliefs are founded on a literal interpretation of the Bible, and we strive to affirm and uphold the fundamental teachings of New Testament faith. We believe in a born-again spiritual experience and that God gives a saved individual power to live without sin; other groups teach a different approach to how a person receives salvation, and hold that Christians sin every day in thought, word, and deed. We hold a Wesleyan view of holiness, though very few other churches in our day teach Wesley's view that sanctification is a definite, instantaneous experience. We stress the need for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which empowers sanctified believers for service. We hold to the Arminian view of salvation (man's free will), rather than the Calvinistic position of predestination and eternal security. We are also Trinitarian, believing that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are united in one Godhead. We draw a clear distinction between nominal and genuine Christianity, and teach the importance of daily living an overcoming Christian life and keeping oneself "unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

In addition, we also differ from many other religious organizations regarding standards of morality—for example, some churches condone divorce and remarriage,[3] permit homosexuality,[4] or devalue life by allowing abortion and/or physician-assisted suicide.[5] Since these considerations will affect our eternal destiny, we cannot consider them to be insignificant.

Scripture indicates that God insists on distinction and purity in doctrinal teachings and practices. God told the Prophet Ezekiel that priests in Israel "have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them" (Ezekiel 22:26). We choose to resist any pressure to set aside what God has called us to believe and teach in order to be accepted by those who want us to be non-denominational in character.

In addition to doctrinal differences, there are also a number of holiness-based practices upheld by those who participate in the Apostolic Faith organization which distinguish us from many other religious groups.

- We advocate the Biblical view of living in a holy, modest, and conservative manner, believing that our appearance, dress, and behavior should speak of Christ and be appropriate for one who represents Him.[6]
- We teach that activities such as gambling, use of tobacco and alcoholic beverages, and controlled substances such as hallucinogens or other non-prescription, mood-altering drugs, have no part in the lives of those who are followers of Christ.[7]
- There are also organizational practices which distinguish us from other religious groups.
- We do not hold worship services in conjunction with other denominations or invite ministers from other churches to come and teach in our services in a "sharing of pulpits." We avoid affiliation with ecumenical religious associations unless doing so is a government requirement.[8]
- We believe that God is able to provide for the spread of the Gospel, so our work for Him is supported financially by tithes and offerings. No solicitations are made of the public, nor are collections taken in our services.

While these are some of the major points that distinguish us from other religious organizations, there are

other details which set us apart as well. The fact is that every denomination has its own policy and practices, so it is altogether appropriate for our organization to adhere to the policy and practices of this work. We are not apologetic for the way in which we present the Gospel. Our "mode of operation" is found in Acts 2:42: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Our message is the message that the leaders of the Early Church preached, and we advocate the way of life they advocated.

We cherish the Gospel that was handed down to us by the pioneers of the Apostolic Faith work, and we have no desire to compromise any part of what we have received. We have been commissioned by God to pass on to the next generation, as nearly as we can, what was delivered to us. Our prayer is that as we uphold the doctrines, practices, and denominational character that has always distinguished this organization, others will be inspired to commit their lives to God, challenged to a deeper walk of holiness, and motivated to seek God for the promised infilling of the Holy Spirit.

[1] The word *denomination* refers to religious organizations whose congregations operate under a common name, and are united in tradition, identity, and their adherence to certain beliefs and practices.

[2] See the section of this manual titled *Doctrines of the Holy Scriptures* for a more complete detailing of our doctrinal position.

[3] For more information regarding our position on this subject, see the topic *The Sanctity of Marriage* in this manual.

[4] For more information regarding our position on this subject, see the topic *Human Sexuality* in this manual.

[5] For more information regarding our position on this subject, see the topic *Sanctity of Life* in this manual.

[6] For more information regarding our position on this subject, see the topic *Appearance/Modesty* in this manual.

[7] For more information regarding our position on this subject, see the topics *Gambling* and *Use of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Controlled Substances* in this manual.

Church Incorporation

In order to function and fulfill its mission, a religious organization in the United States can operate most efficiently if it is recognized by the government as a formal legal entity. This is accomplished through the process of incorporating. The Apostolic Faith organization was incorporated under the laws of the State of Oregon with the official name, "Apostolic Faith Mission of Portland, Oregon" on October 12, 1909.

Being incorporated as a church offers certain legal benefits and protections. First, the government recognizes the existence of the group of believers. Second, the church can own and transfer property in the name of the organization, can enter into contracts or agreements as a corporation, and can acquire financing without personal guarantees of the membership or leaders. Third, incorporation protects members of the church from being held personally liable for the acts of other members, as could occur if the group is merely an association.[1] Finally, incorporation allows a church to be registered with the Internal Revenue Service as a nonprofit organization, which grants it a tax-exempt status and allows it to receive donations and recognize contributions for tax purposes.

Incorporation necessitates certain legal steps taken in accordance with individual state law, including the drafting and filing of the charter or articles of incorporation. Our organizational structure and governing principles are recorded in this document, which provides the framework for legal, administrative, and business decisions under Oregon law.[2]

It is the responsibility of the local pastor to ascertain the law in the state where he or she serves, and make sure that the church registration is kept up to date if renewal is required. In countries other than the United States, it is the responsibility of the local pastor to ensure that the church's registration/legal status is in accordance with the legal requirements of the country/state where the church operates.

[1] An unincorporated church is known as an "association," which denotes a fellowship in which the members are associated together in holding church services.

[2] For more information about the constitution of the Apostolic Faith organization, see the section of this manual titled *Church Constitution and Bylaws.*

Constitution and Bylaws

God's Word admonishes us, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40). Although in this passage the Apostle Paul was specifically addressing how to conduct church worship, the principle also applies to governing the body of Christ.

In the Apostolic Faith work, we have accomplished this by putting in place written documents which delineate the fundamental principles or established precedents by which the organization operates. The primary document's title is "Articles of Incorporation of The Apostolic Faith Mission of Portland, Oregon."[1] Registered with the State of Oregon in 1909, it is a legal document and as such it is binding upon all its constituents. In addition, we have documents which establish the bylaws, or governing principles, for the organization.

We refer to these key documents as our "Constitution and Bylaws." Among other things, they establish the headquarters of this work as being in Portland, Oregon, define our purpose as an organization, and outline the structure of our church government. They also deal with such matters as the duties of various church officials, the ordaining and credentialing of ministers, and the management of finances within the organization.

In the United States, Apostolic Faith branch churches function under the Constitution and Bylaws of the Portland headquarters; they do not have independent church constitutions. Some states require branch churches to be registered with their state government related to tax issues.[2] This process typically includes putting on file with the state government a copy of the church's constitution; this is provided by the headquarters church in Portland when that is the case.

In the international community, Apostolic Faith branch churches operate in unity with the headquarters church, rather than having a separate identity. The church constitution for each country is modeled after a sample constitution provided by the headquarters church, and modified only when adjustments are necessary in order to comply with the country's laws.

The following steps are taken when an Apostolic Faith work is established in a new region or country.

- The headquarters in Portland, Oregon, provides a draft of the constitution completed for the particular country where a new work is being established.
- Representatives of the new international branch take the draft to a local attorney so it can be adapted to conform with local law.
- When the attorney has made any necessary modifications, the draft is proofread by representatives of the church, and then sent to the headquarters church for review.
- The completed document is signed by the representatives of the headquarters church and the international branch church.
- The local leader or attorney takes the appropriate steps to register the church with the country's government.

[1] This document had to be registered with the State of Oregon in order for the organization to be recognized legally as a corporation.

[2] For example, in some states a church must register in order to qualify for a nonprofit, tax exempt status for sales or property taxes. If there are questions regarding whether it is necessary, or whether there would be some financial advantage for a church to register, the pastor or branch church representative should discuss the matter with a local attorney or tax consultant. It is the responsibility of the pastor to make sure that registration is kept current.

Church Branches

Since the Apostolic Faith headquarters church was established in Portland, Oregon, in 1908, the work has grown. Dedicated men and women of God invested their lives in the spread of the Gospel, and established branch churches in various areas of the United States.

In time, the work expanded into the international community as well. Literature mailed from the Portland headquarters to foreign countries made many initial contacts. In countries around the globe, spiritually hungry people who read the Gospel truths published by this organization gathered in groups to worship God, and many of them later asked to come under the leadership of the Portland headquarters. At times, ministers and workers from Apostolic Faith churches traveled to other countries, meeting with the literature contacts, holding church services, and aiding in the establishment of branch churches. Today, we have churches and literature distributors sprinkled across six continents.

One of the unique characteristics of the Apostolic Faith organization is our global unity and consistent manner of worldwide operation. All branches of the organization, both domestic and international, are under the leadership and direction of the headquarters, and uphold the same Bible doctrines. They are also one in purpose and in practice with the headquarters church. Those who travel to our branch churches throughout the world feel at home spiritually, even though surroundings, languages, and cultures may be vastly different. Many representatives from branch churches attend the annual summer camp meeting conventions, studying the truths of God's Word together. These annual events have strengthened the warm and supportive bond that exists between the branch churches.

Those who desire to become a part of the Apostolic Faith organization must take an uncompromising stand for the Bible doctrines as printed in our official publications, and embrace the traditions and practices of this work. They must remain separated from all that is false or fanatical. They also are required to conform their lives to the standard of Christian conduct as set forth in God's Word to "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:12).

Counsel to Ministers

From time to time, groups of believers who wish to become a part of the Apostolic Faith work form around the world. We have small congregations in many locations that have an understanding of and appreciation for our doctrines and operational methods, but no formalized legal connection with headquarters. It is necessary to maintain a uniform policy regarding how and when such groups can become a legally recognized part of this organization.

In general, emerging works should not move forward immediately to establish a formal legal connection with headquarters. While we will do what we can to instruct and encourage such groups spiritually, the group must meet the following criteria before initiating the legal process to form a national organization and become an officially recognized branch of the Apostolic Faith work. They must:

- Have spiritually qualified local leadership with a proven track record of at least two years. There must be an approved minister who can effectively organize and administrate the work.
- Have a congregation (or group of congregations) numbering at least two hundred adult-age members in good standing, who have been participating or attending for no less than two years.
- Have specific reasons why forming a legal presence in the country will be beneficial. The benefits for doing so must outweigh the risks.

When local leadership feels the criteria listed above have been met, two representatives of headquarters will

visit the location to assess the situation. These representatives will subsequently make a recommendation to the Superintendent General, who will present the matter to the Board of Trustees for approval.

When approval by the Board of Trustees has been granted, the local church leadership will be authorized to proceed with the steps established by the organization for legal recognition of groups in the international community, and noted in the section of this manual titled "Constitution and Bylaws."

For groups that do not meet the above criteria, the Regional Director in conjunction with local church leaders will investigate legal alternatives such as associations and other religious "umbrella organizations" that could potentially provide the group with any necessary standing in their community or country, but would not require headquarters to surrender its autonomy.

The expense and risk of creating a legal entity for a small group of people is not justifiable and should not be driven by the acquisition of assets such as property. Headquarters only acquires property when it can be done in a manner allowed by local law and in which headquarters retains control of the title.

Church Property

Our churches and the land upon which they are constructed belong to God, and exist for His work. This fundamental fact must undergird every consideration about church property.

Real property acquired by the Apostolic Faith organization, both at the headquarters and in branch churches around the world, must be registered in accordance with the guidelines given in the section of this manual titled *Acquisition and Care of Church Property,* and as stipulated in the *Constitution and Bylaws* for Apostolic Faith churches.

Our church sanctuaries are places of worship, religious instruction, and other church-related activities, and are not used for commercial or political purposes. In the United States, this would violate laws that permit our tax exemption as a non-profit organization. In accordance with Jesus' words in Matthew 21:13, we avoid buying, selling, or promoting products or services in our sanctuaries.

The appearance and upkeep of church property should reflect the fact that it belongs to God and represents Him. We want those who drive by or visit our places of worship to recognize a spirit of excellence both inside and out. Keep in mind that we never have a second chance to make a first impression, and a *positive* first impression begins with a clean, well-kept church facility.

As part of maintaining a credible witness in our community, all activities on Apostolic Faith Church premises must comply with local ordinances. Those who come to services should abide by restrictions regarding designated parking areas in the neighborhood. We want to do what we can to ensure that activities do not pose a risk of harm to participants or to property, expose the organization to liability, or disturb the surrounding neighbors.

Some practical guidelines direct our approach to caring for properties within the Apostolic Faith organization:

- Facilities should be maintained in good repair, and kept clean and tidy.
- Proper signage should clearly identify the church, and mark each entry/exit point of the building.
- Vehicles, furniture, tools, and equipment belonging to the church also belong to God and should be handled and maintained as such.
- Buildings and their surrounding grounds should be inspected on a regular basis for any potential safety hazards.[1]
- Regular evaluation and preventive maintenance should occur in order to ensure proper functioning of lighting, heating, ventilation, and safety equipment. It is advisable to keep a record regarding scheduled maintenance, replacement schedule, emergency repairs, etc.
- A church property inventory list should be maintained, detailing items such as musical instruments, pews and other furnishings, audio systems, projection equipment, computers, office equipment, kitchen appliances and equipment, etc.
- The security of the facilities during the hours when they are not being used should be considered. Be aware that poor lighting and poor landscaping can offer opportunities for break-ins.

[1] For more on the topic of eliminating potential hazards, see the section of this manual titled *Physical Property Issues,* as well as the *Apostolic Faith Church Safety and Security Manual.*

Counsel for Ministers:

At times we are approached by other organizations with a request for use of our church sanctuaries for concerts, weddings, or other activities. Our churches are for Apostolic Faith use only and are not available for non-church member use. They are set apart for worship in accordance with Jesus' words, "My house shall be called the house of prayer" (Matthew 21:13). They remain sacred places even when no church services are taking place.

In some locations, our church sanctuaries must serve a multi-purpose function due to space limitations. When that is the case, events such as a music recital or church fellowship event may be held there. However, we should ensure that any usage is in harmony with the holy nature of God's house.

There may be times when community-related uses for our church grounds or auxiliary facilities (other than our sanctuaries) are proposed. The primary guideline in such cases would be to make sure that such uses align with the conservative nature of our organization. If permission is granted for community activities other than church services, all policies and procedures defined in the *Apostolic Faith Safety and Security Manual* must be followed.

Church Membership

Assembling together with fellow believers for worship and service to God has Scriptural precedent. In the Early Church, believers gathered with the Apostles for teaching, fellowship, and prayer. However, there is no record that a formal membership roll existed; instead, they simply incorporated those who were added to their number by the Lord.[1] Many other Scriptures, such as Jesus' own words, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7), indicate that salvation was the prerequisite for being included in this fellowship of believers.[2]

Following the example of the Early Church, in the Apostolic Faith organization we do not ask those who attend our services to "join" our church. We have never emphasized expanding our membership numbers at the expense of compromising our Bible doctrines and practices. Rather, we focus on encouraging those who attend our services to surrender their lives to God and to live godly lives without sin. While new converts are warmly welcomed into the family of God and the local congregation, they are not given a formal reception as members.

The Apostolic Faith organization does not keep a membership roll. At the headquarters church, a record is kept for reference and legal purposes of those who are baptized in water by this organization. We have a database which includes the names of those who consider themselves to be a part of the Apostolic Faith Church in Portland, attend our camp meetings, request our literature, or ask to be contacted regarding church functions. Most of our churches maintain local address and phone lists of those who currently attend, primarily so those individuals can be notified of upcoming events and of changes in the regular schedule.

While we do not keep formal membership records, we do believe that it is vital for believers to commit themselves to regular church attendance. Jesus taught the importance of meeting together, telling His disciples that "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). The followers of Christ began to meet together immediately after Jesus' crucifixion; we have no Scriptural indication that any remained separate from the local church. We read that the Apostle Paul "assayed to join himself to the disciples" (Acts 9:26) when he came to Jerusalem after his conversion. The writer of Hebrews exhorted early believers not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, ". . . and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

[1] See Acts 2:47; 5:14

[2] For example, see Acts 6:7; 11:21. The word *church* as used in the New Testament is a translation of the Greek word *ecclesia*, simply meaning "called out ones," reflecting the fact that Christ's followers are called to be distinct from the world.

Counsel for Ministers

At times, an individual who has been in the Apostolic Faith services or work will begin propagating opposing teachings. As pastors and leaders, it is part of our ministerial responsibility to refuse to grant such individuals an opportunity to voice false doctrine in the church (see Titus 1:10-11).

Scripture teaches that we must be of a forgiving spirit—patient and longsuffering toward those who are weak in the faith or who fall into error. Such individuals must be welcomed at church services in the same manner as any other sinner in need of God.

However, Scripture points to a different approach concerning those who come with "another Gospel." These are to be rejected, but only after several patient admonitions to show them the error of their ways (Galatians 1:8, 9; Titus 3:10; 2 John 10-11). We understand these to be people who have once had the fullness of the Gospel in their hearts, but who have turned to false doctrine and are attempting to persuade others.

Restriction from attending an Apostolic Faith Church, sometimes referred to as *excommunication* or *disfellowshipping*, is an action that is exercised only as a last resort. As pastors, we should never independently take it upon ourselves to disfellowship anyone, no matter how grievous the offense or how heretical the offender. We should seek the counsel of our District Superintendent or the Superintendent General to make sure that all are agreed that this is the necessary and appropriate step because of the serious nature of the dissension being created.

For more detailed information on the topic of dealing with situations of this nature, refer to the section of this manual titled *Relationships with Individuals with Specific Needs.*

Church Camp Meetings

Since the early days of the Apostolic Faith work, annual midsummer camp meetings have been held at the headquarters in Portland. These conventions have proved to be a source of spiritual revival and a valuable means of evangelism, as well as establishing an indescribably precious bond between members around the world.[1]

From 1907 through 1919, camp meetings in Portland were held at rented locations. In 1920, an eleven-acre piece of land at Southeast Fifty-second and Duke was purchased for use as a campground, and one year later, a domed tabernacle was built. Over the years, we have constructed additional buildings on the grounds, including the small individual cabins and cabin cluster units which currently accommodate visitors who come from around the world for each year's convention. In the years since 1920, the Portland campground has become an icon of our international organization.

During camp meeting, attendees enter into an intensive study of God's Word; on most days, services are held in the morning, afternoon, and evening. During these services, ministers emphasize the foundational spiritual experiences of justification, sanctification, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, along with topics relating to practical Christian living.

Much the same format is followed in other Apostolic Faith camp meetings which are held each year in various locations around the world. Two other camp meetings are held each summer in the United States: one in Century, Florida, and one in the Midwest. We also have annual Apostolic Faith camp meetings in Canada, Norway, the United Kingdom, Romania, Korea, the Philippines, India, and several nations in Africa and South America. Whether three days or three weeks in length, the challenge to progress spiritually is issued repeatedly throughout the services in many different ways.

Camp meetings are often the setting for special sessions held for attendees involved in the ministry, Sunday school, music departments, or other outreach activities. Occasionally, representatives from international branches, or those who have visited a foreign branch, give presentations telling what God has done in distant places. These sessions are always an inspiration.

A byproduct of camp meetings is fellowship, and that blessing is always a hallmark of these events. As Christian families and friends from distant fields of service meet at these sessions, camp meeting becomes a grand reunion of the children of God. Those who come for the first time soon feel that they are members of this big family too, and all enjoy this special time together.

As each camp meeting goes forward, it is clear that the spiritual admonition being delivered is taken to heart. Meeting after meeting, those who come seeking spiritual experiences stand to their feet and glorify God for filling their needs. In fact, often so many want to testify that four or five people are standing at one time, waiting their turns!

At the close of each service, all are invited to pray. Many respond to the invitation and make their way to the front where they kneel in prayer, some seeking forgiveness for sins, and others praying for a closer walk with the Lord.

Near the end of most of our camp meetings, an ordinance service is held. This is always a special time, as the Spirit confirms the unity and harmony among people of diverse race, culture, and nationality. Usually, a water baptismal service is held the same day, and many converts, young and old, are immersed annually.

At the close of each camp meeting, those who attended look back on the time with gratitude for the spiritual ground that was gained. And they look ahead with anticipation to the continued blessing and presence of God as they return with new spiritual vigor to their post of duty.

[1] For a more complete overview of the camp meetings held at the headquarters in Portland, refer to the organization's history book, titled *The Apostolic Faith: History, Doctrine, and Purpose.*

Church Literature

A primary means of evangelism in the Apostolic Faith organization is the production and distribution of Gospel literature.[1] Over the years, papers and tracts in more than seventy languages and dialects have been produced at the headquarters in Portland, and in other designated areas of the world. Millions of pieces of literature have been distributed, and God has used them to impact lives for eternity.

We currently publish a quarterly magazine titled *The Apostolic Faith*. As our flagship publication, it offers readers an ongoing presentation of our core beliefs, primarily by providing sermons and testimonies from our church services. We also produce numerous tracts and small booklets meant to lead people to the Lord, several Sunday school curriculums, and a daily devotional combined with commentary notes which takes readers through the entire Bible. A unique feature of our literature ministry is that for the most part our publications are produced and distributed throughout the world free of charge.

At times, a single tract or paper has had a far-reaching impact. From a tract that came to a man in Ghana (then Gold Coast) many years ago, hundreds of people were converted, and that led to the establishing of Apostolic Faith churches in that country. In the Dominican Republic, someone found a Gospel paper beside the road, and that was the beginning of a work in that area which now numbers more than sixty churches. In Korea, a man who was about to commit suicide received a tract. He contacted the church, gave his heart to God, and later became a minister and pastor.

In the United States, publications are sent to thousands of individuals. Teams of workers take print versions to hospitals, care facilities, and juvenile detention centers, and distribute them in local neighborhoods. The many letters, emails, and testimonials that arrive daily at the headquarters office show that God's blessing continues to rest on this literature ministry.

Many aspects of our literature production have changed over the years. We periodically update both our process and the visual appearance of the items we produce. New areas of outreach are continually explored, as the Lord leads. Currently, most of our printed publications are also available on our website at www.apostolicfaith.org.

Information regarding the role those of us in the ministry should take in this effort can be found in the section of this manual titled *Literature Distribution.*

[1] For an in-depth review of the literature ministry of The Apostolic Faith, see the chapter titled "Headquarters Office Publication Ministry" in our history book, *The Apostolic Faith: History, Doctrine, and Purpose.*

Church Website

From its inception, the purpose of the organization's website at www.apostolicfaith.org has been to lift up Jesus Christ, draw souls into this Latter Rain Gospel, and strengthen believers in their faith. It has allowed us to introduce digital versions of our flagship publication, *The Apostolic Faith*, our through-the-Bible devotional series, and other publications to audiences with whom we had no personal contact or opportunity to reach through printed literature.

As pastors and ministers in this work, we want to be sure to build interest in the website by promoting it to our local congregations. In addition to offering a wealth of information about our organization, it offers many intangible gains such as a connection between our churches and the people of God who attend in various locations.

Our logo, featuring the message, "Jesus the Light of the World," appears on most of the pages of the website. From entry points on the homepage, viewers can access the calendar of church events around the world or in Portland, subscribe to *The Apostolic Faith* magazine or read the online edition, view live webcasts or archived services at the Portland church, access print copies of our publications in the Library, read or listen to a daily devotional, and enjoy news from the Pastor's Journal.

We want website visitors to know they are always welcome in person at Apostolic Faith churches around the world. A searchable map on the site allows viewers to locate the branch church nearest them and get directions on how to reach the church.

News from Apostolic Faith churches around the globe can be found on the World News page. Those interested in learning about what is happening at the headquarters can access that information from the Portland Church entry point on the home page. In that area of the site, viewers can read the Pastor's Journal column, view the Portland calendar, enjoy news and pictures about recent events, find resources and information especially for youth, and learn about the Portland music and Sunday school. The site also includes information regarding the safety policies of the Apostolic Faith organization, and makes available the various standardized forms we use.

Publishing and distributing Gospel literature has been this organization's niche in the Christian world for over a century, so we have generated a wide range of articles and publications related to this Latter Rain Gospel; we have a significant collection of audio and video files as well. Most of these materials are available in the Library section of our website. Publications, including our various Sunday school curriculums, can be read online or downloaded. Visitors can watch video clips or live webcasts of Portland services and occasional other events, and download or listen to audio files of music and sermons.

The website contains a resource area especially for ministers and pastors of the Apostolic Faith work. This page, available only to registered users, allows you access to memos from headquarters, links to ministerial training sessions, and other ministerial resources. We encourage all our ministers and pastors to register and then visit this area on a regular basis.

Thousands of viewers each year visit our website for spiritual edification, or to learn more about this organization. People from more than two hundred countries around the globe have benefited by the spiritual content that fills its pages. Sister sites have been developed by numbers of branch churches, including sites from both international and United States branches of the Apostolic Faith work.

Operational Budget

The operational budget for the Apostolic Faith organization as a whole is established and implemented at the headquarters in Portland, Oregon, with branch churches maintaining their own local budgets. In order to fulfill our mandate to serve as good stewards, we must carefully monitor and review programs and costs each year, use donations and revenues for their intended purposes, and adhere to specified financial policies and procedures.

Operating income comes primarily from three sources: tithes, offerings, and amounts received from branch churches to assist in the worldwide ministry. More than three-fourths of Portland's annual operating resources come to us through tithes and offerings.[1] Some of the offerings received are designated offerings. These are amounts that individuals have given above their tithes, specifically requesting where they wanted the money to be used. Those amounts are entered into a general ledger account for tracking and used accordingly.

The amount received from branch churches is a tithe. A number of domestic branch churches send headquarters ten percent of the tithe money that they receive. Churches outside of the United States are encouraged to tithe to their district headquarters to support the work in their respective areas.

Each year's projected operating budget is based on amounts received in the prior year, or an average of the last several years. Major allocation categories are determined, and financial decisions and distributions are made accordingly.

We try each year to properly balance our resources between sustaining the local church and direct outreach endeavors. We are aware that there are more needs to be met than there are resources to meet them. Therefore, we must prayerfully prioritize them, striving always to fulfill the Great Commission in reaching out beyond ministering to ourselves.

[1] For more information regarding the Biblical principles behind this approach, see the section of this manual titled *Tithes and Offerings.*

Compassionate Outreaches

We believe that just as God has a specific purpose and plan for each individual, He has a particular role for the Apostolic Faith organization in the general mandate to all believers, "Go ye into all the world . . ." (Mark 16:15). The main purpose of our ministry has always been to produce and distribute free Christian literature which reflects our holiness, Pentecostal tradition throughout the world. However, while spiritual needs are our primary focus, we do not ignore the tremendous physical needs that exist in many parts of the world.

Christians have compassionate hearts, and the desire to "bear one another's burdens" results in spontaneous efforts to assist with physical needs as we are able. While this typically occurs through personal donations and efforts of individuals in our Apostolic Faith congregations, rather than on a corporate level, occasionally we do respond with a structured benevolent or assistance program. This is especially true in the aftermath of catastrophic natural disasters, which bring the loss of homes, property, and means of livelihood to our own church people as well as others. In these situations, it is natural for Apostolic Faith members around the world to want to help.

In addition to responding to national emergencies, those in our churches reach out in a variety of ways to meet needs in their local communities. At the Portland headquarters, individuals participate in an ongoing benevolent outreach by collecting and distributing food and household supplies to impoverished families. Some have formed groups to sew clothes for children in orphanages, knit sweaters and caps for those in need, host canned food drives, or participate in various other efforts to provide physical necessities.

When our organization has no contacts in an area affected by a natural disaster, we recommend donations be made to the Salvation Army, the American Red Cross, or some other reputable humanitarian organization if the desire is for donations to directly benefit impacted areas.

Christian School Ministries

In several places around the world, Apostolic Faith branch churches operate Christian schools.[1] The structure of these facilities varies from country to country, and is based upon the religious, educational, and political cultures of the region. Specific courses of study, policies, and pricing are established locally.

While Apostolic Faith schools offer a quality and faith-based education for the students, they are primarily operated as a means of getting the Gospel message into homes that would otherwise not be open to Christianity. This must always be at the forefront of any plan or endeavor carried out under the auspices of the Apostolic Faith organization.

Plans to begin a Christian school must be thoroughly discussed at the outset with the district superintendent, who will in turn consult with the regional director. While an outreach of this nature has obvious potential, it also presents significant challenges. Great care must be taken that the school does not absorb resources that should be directed into other outreach efforts of the local church. Financing, accommodation, staffing, safety, educational policies, and most importantly, inherent risks, must be carefully and prayerfully evaluated ahead of time. Unless a consensus is reached by the leaders of the work in support of the effort, no steps should be taken to begin the project.

[1] For more information about schools that are currently in operation under the auspices of the Apostolic Faith organization, see our church website at www.apostolicfaith.org.

Organizational Structure and Roles

Overview of Organizational Structure

While the Apostolic Faith organization historically has chosen to emphasize the spiritual aspects of the Gospel rather than church government, we recognize that structure is important for both the harmony and the permanency of the church. It is the polity (form or system of governance) of an organization which establishes the principles, offices, accountabilities, and procedures of congregational life. Among Christian denominations, church government is typically categorized in one of three ways: congregational (each local church is independent, and everyone votes on decisions), presbyterian (elders are elected to handle church business/appointments), and episcopal (appointments/decisions are made by leaders appointed by leaders above them, working in unity with elders).

While Apostolic Faith polity perhaps mostly closely resembles the episcopal type of government, we rely on the leading of God to direct the general course of this work and the specific decisions made. In that sense, we are a theocracy (organization headed by God) rather than a democracy. Scripture clearly indicates that Jesus Christ "is the head of the body, the church" (Colossians 1:18), as well as its Lord and Savior. All authority within the church is delegated from Him, for we read that "he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-12).[1] Since God called and appointed them, these leaders of the church are accountable to Him for how they discharge their responsibilities. At the same time, they are to be accountable to each other.

Initial references to the governing of the Early Church appear in the first chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, when the disciples chose Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot in their ranks. While the Early Church was still in its infancy, the groups of believers which gathered in various locations clearly had recognized forms of worship and service, and operated under the direction of church officials.[2] When conflicts arose in a local assembly, the matter often was settled by a council meeting or by the church authorities in Jerusalem, indicating that there was a hierarchy of authority within the leaders of the church.[3]

Governance of the Apostolic Faith work is based upon these Biblical examples. The governing body of the organization is a Board of Trustees of which the Superintendent General is the president. Regional directors supervise the efforts in various areas of the world, and account to the Superintendent General. District superintendents are appointed over specific countries, and report to the regional directors. Pastors and ministerial staffs work under the supervision of the regional directors.

This sharing of responsibility is based in part on the Scriptural precedent found in Exodus chapter 18. When Moses' father-in-law observed Moses' role in his leading of the Children of Israel, he inquired, "Why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even?" He counseled his son-in-law to "provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens; and let them judge the people at all seasons" (Exodus 18:14, 21-22). The same principle of shared responsibility was instituted in the New Testament church, for example when the disciples chose "seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom" (Acts 6:3) to assist in serving the church. We are stronger as an organization when more individuals bear the responsibilities of leadership.[4]

A Board of Elders, though not mentioned in the constitution and bylaws of the organization, is an informal group that provides a basis of support in the decision-making of the leaders. At headquarters, this group generally consists of United States pastors and retired pastors, but it may also include ministers and veteran workers who are suited to participate in a particular decision-making process. We look for counsel and input

from these trustworthy saints who have often spent many years loving the Apostolic Faith Church and what it stands for, and whose expertise lends itself to the subject under consideration.

The government of the Apostolic Faith work is not a democracy—the congregation does not vote on appointments, procedures, or policy decisions. Rather, leaders of the Apostolic Faith look to God for guidance, and desire that every effort takes place under His direction and anointing. This method of governance is supported by thousands of spiritually-committed believers worldwide.

[1] The Old Testament also establishes the same principle. We read that it is the Spirit of God Himself who seeks out and appoints each one to his post of duty, since "promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another" (Psalm 75:6, 7).

[2] Philippians 1:1; Acts 20:17; 1 Timothy 4:14

[3] Acts 15; 1 Corinthians 3; Philippians 4:2; Colossians 4:17

[4] For more information on this topic, see the section of this manual titled *Leadership*.

Counsel for Ministers

A mention should be made here about subordination. We read in 1 Corinthians 14:32, "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." Hebrews 13:17 exhorts, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, . ." Clearly, we must subordinate ourselves to the Holy Spirit, for He is our Guide and Leader. We must also subordinate ourselves to those whom the Holy Spirit has placed in authority over the work of God. We must bring our own spirits into subjection to one another, and be obedient to those whom God has placed over the flock of God.

God does not necessarily tell each of us everything that concerns the work of God, especially regarding another individual's responsibility to Him. Therefore, we do not always know by direct revelation from the Holy Spirit the instructions and leadings that He is giving to those in authority over us in the Gospel work. However, we can have confidence in their leadership, knowing they are led by God.

Superintendent General

The Superintendent General is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Apostolic Faith Corporation, and leader of the worldwide organization. While we believe that God is the One who chooses and ordains the individual who fills this role, specific duties in connection with the supervision of the organization are delineated for the most part in the *Constitution and Bylaws* of the corporation. Administrative duties include the following.

- To oversee the Apostolic Faith international organization, subject to the guidelines set forth in the *Constitution and Bylaws*.
- To oversee and administer the business affairs of the corporation.
- To preside over the Board of Trustees, supervising the execution of all its orders and resolutions.
- To ordain or appoint regional directors, district superintendents, and/or other representatives of the organization.
- To revoke the credentials and/or appointment of any representative of the organization.
- To direct the annual camp meetings at the headquarters in Portland, Oregon.

In addition, and perhaps even more importantly, the Superintendent General is charged with the responsibility of spiritual leadership of the organization. God has called this organization to proclaim, preserve, and pass on our holiness way of life and the doctrines and traditions of the Latter Rain Gospel. The Superintendent General is the one who leads the way in this God-given challenge; the final determination in policy matters rests upon him. The Biblical basis for this is found in Acts 15 where, after having heard the views of different ones, James made the determination regarding what was required of the Gentiles.

It is our obligation, as pastors and ministers in this work, to do our best to support our Superintendent General in every aspect of his responsibilities.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is a group of appointed individuals who, in conjunction with and under the leadership of the Superintendent General, jointly oversee the business affairs of the Apostolic Faith organization. It was established when our Articles of Incorporation were written in 1909.

The Board consists of not less than three, nor more than five, trustees (also referred to as Board members), including the Superintendent General of the Apostolic Faith organization, who is the President. The Board is authorized by our *Constitution and Bylaws* to carry out the corporate and business affairs of the Apostolic Faith organization, such as buying or selling church property, opening bank accounts, changing authorized signers on accounts, and securing loans. The Board can also authorize an individual to act as a representative of the church; for example, a branch church pastor might be authorized to purchase property at his location. The Board represents the organization in legal matters.

The organization's Bylaws state that Trustees may serve as long as they are faithful to their calling and in discharging their duties before God. Over the years, Board members have resigned for a variety of reasons, including health and personal situations. Vacancies on the Board of Trustees are filled by the affirmative vote of a majority of the remaining trustees. When a vacancy occurs, the Superintendent General typically solicits advice regarding a prospective appointee from Board members and other senior ministers, as he feels led. He then offers a recommendation to the Board, and a decision is made. The ministry is notified, and then the appointment is announced to the congregation at an appropriate time.

Currently the Board comes together at least three times annually to discuss matters of business. Meetings of the Board occur at the request of the Superintendent General or any two of the trustees. Between meetings, Board members are kept informed of major business matters by the Superintendent General.

A typical meeting begins with one of the Board members opening the session with prayer. The Board of Trustees engage in a process that requires evaluating facts and information, weighing risks and potential benefits, and reviewing alternatives. In business matters, once a consensus has been reached, a vote makes the proposed action legal. The Secretary keeps a typed record of every business meeting of the Board.

Members of Board of Trustees also provide spiritual support to the Superintendent General as they prayerfully help bear the burden of responsibility for the organization. They are expected to seek God's guidance and help, to provide godly insights, and to support the Superintendent General in soliciting input. The Board of Trustees, in conjunction with the Superintendent General, has the spiritual authority and responsibility of determining if a minister has behaved in an inappropriate manner, and to what extent.

If the Superintendent General becomes incapacitated in some manner, it would fall upon the Board to determine the path that God would have the organization take. Under ordinary circumstances, the Superintendent General would rely upon the solicited input of the faithful men and women of God around him. The Trustees would be expected to follow that same pattern in choosing a successor to the Superintendent General.

For some business and policy decisions, the Superintendent General and the Board of Trustees solicit the input of knowledgeable and godly people who have the interest of the Apostolic Faith Church and its mission at heart. Those consulted regarding policy decisions often include members of the informal Board of Elders.[1] Sometimes business decisions require consulting experts such as accountants, attorneys, construction engineers, or qualified individuals from the ministry or church body who have expertise on a given matter. The Superintendent General and the Board of Trustees depend significantly upon the input of these people as they participate in helping to guide the direction of the organization as circumstance and their areas of expertise dictate.

[1] For more on this topic, see the section of this manual titled *Elders and Workers.*

Counsel to Ministers

It is not the policy of the Apostolic Faith organization for branch churches to have their own local board. There are advantages and disadvantages to having one, but typically under that system, the local churches are autonomous. This means all decisions are made locally, including the hiring and firing of pastors. The local board, rather than the pastor, also controls all financial matters. That mode of operation can present significant challenges, even resulting in church properties being taken from local congregations, to the benefit of the ones who took them and to the detriment of faithful local saints.

In our organization, branch churches are *not* deemed to be autonomous, but parts of one body. As such, each branch church in the United States is accountable to the Portland headquarters. Internationally, each branch church reports to their district headquarters, which in turn reports to the Portland headquarters.

Local pastors still have a great deal of local control. Naturally, there are advantages and disadvantages to this system as well. A key advantage is that the local church's spiritual focus is less likely to be distracted by temporal matters such as budgets and administrative details. The chief disadvantage is that it is possible for a local pastor to neglect accountability to Portland due to forgetfulness, time constraints, procrastination, or even negligence. As branch church pastors, we can mitigate that potential disadvantage by conscientiously making ourselves accountable to Portland.

The system we use unifies our organization in that we are not only one in doctrine but we are one in mode of operation. It also serves as a safety net for times when either a pastor or key member of a congregation exerts an inordinately strong will, independent of the rest of the organization.

Secretary and Treasurer

As required by the Articles of Incorporation of The Apostolic Faith Mission of Portland, Oregon, the organization has a corporate secretary whose responsibility it is to keep the minutes of the business meetings of the Board of Trustees.[1] This individual is authorized to execute legal instruments for and on behalf of the work, and to do any other task of a legal or administrative nature as instructed by the Superintendent General or the Board of Trustees.

In addition, a treasurer assists the Superintendent General and the Board of Trustees with the financial matters of the organization. The treasurer may be empowered by the Board to oversee the financial management, planning, and investments of our work. He also has the responsibility of maintaining financial records for the Apostolic Faith organization, for the purposes of assessing past actions and creating forecasts for future requirements and goals. He is responsible for the payment of all bills, invoices, and charges accrued by the church, files all required federal and state tax forms, and provides the congregation with the annual financial information required for their personal taxes. The treasurer reports directly to the Superintendent General.

The same individual may concurrently fill both the roles of Secretary and Treasurer. There is no requirement for that person to be a member of the Board of Trustees.

[1] For more information concerning the Articles of Incorporation, see the section of this manual titled *Constitution and Bylaws*.

Regional Directors

Regional directors, most of whom work at the headquarters office or serve in close proximity to Portland, support the Superintendent General and the Board of Trustees by serving as "point persons" for various regions of the world. This role was established as part of a goal to distribute leadership responsibilities within the Apostolic Faith organization. For the most part, regional directors in the Apostolic Faith organization are designated by country or continent.

A regional director's immediate supervisor and advisor is the Superintendent General. The length or term of service for a regional director is established at the discretion of the Superintendent General.

The primary responsibility of a regional director is to serve as a liaison between Superintendent General and the district superintendents and pastors in a specific geographical area of the worldwide organization. This position requires familiarity with the region, for the regional director handles the majority of contacts and dissemination of information to the area. His role eliminates the need for the Superintendent General to communicate directly with scores or even hundreds of individuals to maintain awareness of what is taking place in any given area. The regional director, in coordination with the district superintendent(s) in the given area, also often has the responsibility for administering and supervising camp meetings in that location.

Proverbs 27:23 tells us to know the condition of our flocks. Regional directors are administrators, and thus they need to know the "who, what, where, when and why" of the area under their jurisdiction. If they are to represent their geographical area successfully, they must be thoroughly briefed, and the responsibility for this lies with the district superintendents. The regional director evaluates the information that comes his way, determining what decisions can be allocated to the district superintendents and pastors under them, and what matters need to be brought to the attention of the Superintendent General.

District Superintendents

Appointments of district superintendents have been made in certain countries and geographical areas for more effective administration of the Apostolic Faith work in those localities. These appointments are made by the Superintendent General in conjunction with the regional director of the Apostolic Faith organization in that area. District superintendents are directly accountable to their regional director. If no regional director is currently appointed, they report to the Superintendent General regarding all phases of the work in their assigned district.

District superintendents are authorized to appoint pastors and ministers in their jurisdiction, subject to the approval of their regional director or the Superintendent General. They are empowered to ordain ministers in the absence of the regional director, and to relocate pastors within their jurisdiction as the Spirit leads. They should consult with their regional director on matters of major importance such as acquiring or selling real property belonging to the church, timing and implementation of special campaigns or camp meetings, financial needs, expansion of the work through new churches or outreach endeavors, etc. They also look to their regional director as an advisor regarding personnel issues, personal challenges, resolution of conflicts, proposed major expenditures, etc.

Part of the district superintendent's responsibility is to communicate on a regular basis with his regional director or the Superintendent General, making sure that the ongoing state of the work in the area under his jurisdiction is effectively and fully communicated.

If no district superintendent has been appointed in a given area, the pastors in that geographical region are accountable directly to the regional director.

Pastors

In the Apostolic Faith organization, pastors are the ministers who have spiritual and administrative oversight over a local congregation. In the United States, pastors are appointed by the Superintendent General. In other countries, appointment of pastors occurs at the discretion of the regional director, the district superintendent, and/or their appointees. Pastors serve at their specified location for varied lengths of time. They often are ordained at the time of their appointment, but that is not a necessity in order to serve as a pastor in this work.[1]

The Bible does not explicitly define the role of a pastor, but the meaning of the Greek word we translate as *pastor* is "shepherd" (see Ephesians 4:11). The designation of *pastor* thus refers to one who serves as a spiritual shepherd. In brief, the responsibilities of a pastor are to teach and guide the local congregation in the things of God, to oversee evangelistic efforts of the church, to provide pastoral care to the flock, and to supervise the administrative affairs of the church.[2]

While a pastor receives his call from God, that does not nullify the Biblical mandate for accountability to those in authority over him in the organization. In Scripture, examples for accountability are seen on every level of leadership. Moses was held accountable; kings were subject to accountability; even the Apostles in the Early Church were held accountable by each other. In the Apostolic Faith organization, pastors are accountable to the district superintendent and/or regional director of their geographical location, as well as to the Superintendent General.

[1] Ordination indicates that legal authority has been vested in the minister to perform certain civil duties as a representative of the organization, such as presiding at weddings. For more information on this topic, see the sections of this manual titled *Ordination and Credentials*, and *Ordination and Installation Services.*

[2] For more information on the responsibilities of those who pastor in the Apostolic Faith organization, see the topics under the sections of this manual titled *Ministerial Responsibilities* and *Administrative Work of a Pastor.*

Counsel to Ministers

The fact that Apostolic Faith churches do not have a local board (see the section on *Board of Trustees* for more on this topic) does not eliminate the need for pastors to rely upon local, godly saints in his congregation. The local pastor should not operate independently. God often puts wise elders in each body of believers to whom pastors can look for wisdom and advice, just as the Superintendent General looks to the Board of Trustees and the Board of Elders at headquarters.

Associate Pastors and Other Ministers

We have a large contingent of ministers in the Apostolic Faith organization who labor in supportive roles, but who are not actively pastoring. Most of our congregations in the Apostolic Faith work have a ministerial staff of one or more ministers who assist the pastor in leadership duties at that location. We typically refer to these individuals simply as "ministers." When a title is needed (such as for business cards), we use "associate pastors" (a minister who is active and ordained), "associate ministers" (a minister who is active and not ordained) or "youth minister." We suggest branch churches follow the same pattern.

We believe that ministers are called by God to fill a leadership role within the church. Their duties are wide-ranging, and typically are based upon the needs in the particular locality where they serve, as well as their own individual talents and capabilities.[1] They are accountable to God to discharge their responsibilities in a manner pleasing to Him and in accordance with the guidelines spelled out in His Word. They are also subject to the direction and authority of those who God has placed in leadership over them in the church—their pastor, district superintendent, regional director, and the Superintendent General of the organization.

The title a minister bears does not dictate who leads the meetings on the rare occasions in which a pastor must be absent. We do not operate by seniority, so it is acceptable for a minister who is not ordained to run meetings in the pastor's absence, even when an ordained minister is on staff. We operate by doing our best to discern who God has appointed to a certain role at any given time rather than by a system of tenure.

[1] For more information on the duties of a minister in the Apostolic Faith organization, see the section of this manual titled *Ministerial Responsibilities*.

Counsel for Ministers:

In years past, at times one among the ministers at a particular location was designated as the assistant pastor. However, once that position and title was established, we found it could be difficult or disheartening when an adjustment needed to be made. Any number of reasons can arise that suggest one who was once designated as an assistant would no longer be the best one to fill that role; illness and aging are two of the most obvious reasons. Removing a formal title from a minister in either of those conditions could be discouraging, so the conclusion was reached that it is best not to formalize the title.

At the Portland headquarters, there are a number of active, ordained pastors but no one bears the title of assistant pastor. If there currently is no official assistant pastor in a branch church, we recommend against appointing one. If there is one in place, there is no requirement to change the situation immediately.

As ministers, we must be careful not to deal with situations that should be handled by the pastor, unless he has assigned the matter to us. If a church member comes to us with a concern, we should direct that one to the pastor, as he is in the best position to know the circumstances and personalities involved in situations that arise.

When an assisting minister continually shows public and private support for the pastor, this not only assists in cultivating a healthy relationship between the pastor and the congregation, but also between the assisting minister and the congregation.

Elders and Workers

The Superintendent General and the Board of Trustees often look to knowledgeable and godly veterans in the Apostolic Faith work for input when contemplating business and policy decisions. Those consulted serve as an informal Board of Elders. Although this group is not mentioned in our *Constitution and Bylaws*, its counsel provides a basis of support in the decision-making for the organization. Input from its members is typically solicited independently rather than as a body; unsolicited input is also accepted.

In the narrowest sense, the headquarters Board of Elders consists of all current United States pastors and retired pastors in the Apostolic Faith work. In a broader sense, it includes whatever ministers and Gospel workers are deemed qualified to participate in a decision-making process. Thus, these individuals help to guide the direction of the work as circumstance and their areas of expertise dictate.[1]

Acts 6 makes it clear that delegation and division of labor are part of God's plan. In the Early Church, elders, deacons, and deaconesses not only assumed various responsibilities in the body of believers, but they also supported the leaders of the church.[2] As "labourers together with God" (1 Corinthians 3:9), these godly and faithful men and women provided assistance of both an administrative and spiritual nature for the furtherance of the Gospel.

Through the years, many consecrated workers in this Gospel have labored faithfully to uphold the doctrines and practices of this work, and to provide the conservative and loving atmosphere where many have been saved and grown strong in the faith. Loyalty and appreciation for these dedicated individuals cannot be overstated, and their counsel continues to be a support and guiding voice in the decisions made in the Apostolic Faith organization.

[1] For more information on the connection between those in leadership positions in the organization and the Gospel workers who support them, see the section of this manual titled *Relationship with Workers in the Church.*

[2] For example, see 1 Corinthians 16:15-18.

Committees

At various times in the ongoing work of the Lord, it is deemed necessary or advisable to establish a committee to gather input, plan a project, or oversee a specific area of the work. Jesus himself set the example of laboring together with teams of workers. One of His first acts of ministry was to call twelve individuals to work with Him. He taught, challenged, and empowered these disciples, and eventually gave them opportunities to participate in the spread of the Gospel. In Acts 6, these same disciples effectively organized assisting leaders to serve the various practical needs of the Early Church.

Committees in the Apostolic Faith work are typically convened at the discretion of the local pastor or his appointee. Participants are chosen from the ranks of faithful ministers and/or workers within the organization—those who have the necessary spiritual qualifications, along with the expertise or wisdom that equips them to help in a particular matter. They are often called to bring suggestions or recommendations to the pastor for consideration. Serving on such committees is not permanent, but lasts only for as long as input is needed, or for the duration of the project or task.

Christian courtesy, ethical behavior, and fairness should govern all committee meetings held under the auspices of the Apostolic Faith organization. The moderator can set a tone that will encourage the respect for all. Christian unity is crucial. Sometimes strong feelings will exist on different sides of an issue, but pastors should encourage the church to think of themselves as the body of Christ. As such, we do not seek our own will but the mind of Christ, our Head.

Committees in each branch church location will be as many or as few as the need requires. Some permanent committees (such as ushers, librarians, musicians, and church hostesses) will likely function year-round. Temporary committees, such as a building committee or project oversight committee, may accomplish their assigned task and be dismissed.

Legal Considerations

General Legal Advice

Legal issues and concerns are a fact of life in our society, and the church and its activities are not exempt from them. A lawsuit against our church potentially could be devastating to the congregation, our reputation in the local community, and to the Apostolic Faith organization as a whole. Thus, one part of our role as pastors is to do our best to make sure our church operates in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and implements common sense safeguards in order to reduce the risk of liability and promote a safe environment in all of our church facilities.

Obtaining Legal Counsel

There may be times when our churches need advice about a legal matter, or are faced with a lawsuit or legal claim. When such a situation arises, we should contact legal counsel for assistance.

The first step may be to find out whether our church insurer will provide an attorney. Some types of lawsuits and legal claims may be covered by the church's insurance policy. If that is not the case, we may want to check with the Apostolic Faith pastor who served in our location before we assumed the pastorate; he or she might have a recommendation for an attorney in our area. We might also check with other churches in the community or with members of our congregation to see if they could make a recommendation. If the legal need requires expertise in church or nonprofit law, be sure to inquire if the attorneys contacted have represented other churches or nonprofit organizations. We may need to interview several attorneys when choosing one to represent the church.

In countries outside of the United States, pastors should check with their Regional Director or District Superintendent for advice on how to proceed in the event of legal issues.

Avoiding Potential Litigation

Churches today exist in an increasingly regulated and litigation prone environment, and this makes an awareness of legal risks more important than it was even a decade or two ago. As pastors, there are a number of proactive steps we can take to lessen the likelihood of our church being taken to court.[1] Among these are:

- Carefully follow the guidelines provided in the *Apostolic Faith Safety and Security Manual* and other related safety materials provided by headquarters.
- Make sure that volunteers and staff in your local congregation fulfill the training requirements listed in the safety materials provided by headquarters.
- Be familiar with and abide by governmental laws and regulations concerning churches and nonprofit organizations.
- Behave with care and integrity toward both the church's members and the general public.
- Keep clear and accurate records of financial matters, employment data, counseling sessions, and maintenance and safety procedures.
- Maintain adequate insurance coverage.
- Instruct and train church staff and volunteers to act with due caution and utmost integrity in all situations.

Circumventing Claims of Negligence

The term *negligence* in a legal sense means the failure to exercise a reasonable degree of care, especially with regards to the protection of other persons. Negligence in the church can occur in several contexts, such as finances, selection of employees and volunteers, vehicle operation, physical property maintenance, proper supervision of minors, etc. Negligence can expose the church to claims that could have tremendous financial impact.

There are several basic steps that we can take to avoid claims of negligence against the church.

- Remove potential hazards from church property and post appropriate signage in danger zones.
- Secure the church facility when it is not in use.
- Take necessary precautions to protect those who attend church services, including training ushers to be alert to security issues when services are in process.
- Provide adequate supervision for all church-sponsored events held on or off church property. Avoid sponsoring high-risk activities.
- Respond immediately to credible information related to dangerous or improper conditions or situations.
- Provide proper training and instruction for all individuals who represent the church.
- Hold accountable any individuals who disregard personal safety and place persons at risk.

In conclusion, while it is prudent and necessary to do what we can to make our churches safe and to protect the organization from legal claims, we cannot let the fear of a lawsuit hinder our outreach efforts. Scripture tells us, "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe" (Proverbs 29:25). We could use the possibility of being sued as a reason to delay or eliminate practically any ministry endeavor. We must be wise and as cautious as possible and then trust the Lord as we develop the ministries we believe would be most pleasing to Him.

[1] For more detailed information, see subsequent topics in this manual titled *Tax and Financial Issues, Physical Property Issues, Public Safety Issues, Insurance Issues, Copyright Issues*, and *Emergency Preparedness.*

Emergency Preparedness

Emergencies, medical crises, or disasters can take many forms. While we do not expect such events to occur, we know that they can happen. Fire, severe weather, civil disturbances, accidents, sudden illness, or even intruders can threaten our congregations. It may be necessary to evacuate our church when we least expect it. As pastors, it is incumbent upon us to do what we can to ensure the safety and security of those who come to our places of worship.[1]

The best way to protect our local congregations and the organization itself is to consider potential hazards and develop a well-thought-out emergency action plan. Guidelines for dealing with emergencies can help minimize potential dangers, help us to respond appropriately when crises do occur, and reduce the risk of legal problems for the organization.

Whether our church is a simple structure or a church complex with several buildings, whether it is located in a rural area or the heart of an urban center, and whether our congregation is comprised primarily of senior citizens or young people, effective emergency preparedness involves three basic components: assessment, preparation, and training for appropriate response.

Assessment:

Assessment will involve identifying emergency situations that could possibly impact your branch church. Fire risk is an obvious consideration for every public building. In addition, we should evaluate the potential for environmental events such as hurricanes, tornados, floods, ice and snow storms, or earthquakes. Consideration should also be given to emergencies related to menacing persons, weapons, or bomb threats.

The next step will be to evaluate the likelihood of potential harm. It is useful to categorize each potential emergency situation as "low," "medium," or "high probability" indicating where it falls in a spectrum ranging from "little chance of minor injury," to "significant chance of serious injury to one or more individuals." Geographic location, type of building, age of attendees, neighborhood environment, local weather patterns, and other considerations will influence this rating. We must take care not to dismiss the possibility of a certain type of emergency because we think, "That will never happen here."

When the potential emergency situations have been categorized, we need to determine what steps can be taken to prevent such events from occurring, or to limit the severity of the harm. Many times the measures put into place to address risks are not complex. Sometimes only a simple procedural implementation or minor purchase is sufficient.

Preparation:

Effective preparation for emergencies should always begin with prevention, beginning with a review of the safety and security of our church facilities. Smoke detectors, fire alarms, and extinguishers should be in place, regularly tested, and properly maintained. Adequate security systems should be installed, and parking areas and entry/exit areas well-lit.

Several other measures will help in preparations to cope with unexpected emergencies and/or reduce the impact of such situations.

- Have a written plan outlining what steps should be taken in specific emergencies.
- Train ushers and other key individuals such as department leaders and ministerial staff in how to identify irregular behavior and pre-incident indicators, as well as how to respond to emergency situations once they develop.

- Implement monitoring of entryways and hallways while services are in progress.
- Maintain well-stocked first aid kits at various locations in your facility, and make sure ushers and key personnel know where the kits are located.
- Identify Fire/Emergency exits clearly with appropriate signage, and install emergency lighting systems where needed.
- Consider installing a paging/public address system that can be heard in all parts of the building.
- Develop an evacuation procedure, and post maps that identify emergency exits and routes. Train your ushers in how to direct people from the building. If your Sunday school facilities are separate from the sanctuary, leaders in each area should be thoroughly familiar with the evacuation procedure.
- Keep in mind those with special needs in your congregation, and make plans that will accommodate them.
- If possible, have a trained medical professional available who can do an immediate assessment of any illness or injury. If no one in your congregation qualifies, you may want to have someone on staff get training in basic first aid skills and CPR.

Appropriate Response:

Establishing guidelines for dealing with emergencies during church and ministry activities can help ensure quick assistance for the injured and reduce the risk of legal problems for your church. The following brief descriptions for common emergencies can serve as a basis for developing more complete response procedures.

Accident

- Apply basic first aid if necessary.
- If the accident is serious, call for emergency medical help.
- If the injured party is a minor, contact the parents.
- Ask someone to wait outside to direct the emergency personnel coming to the scene.
- Record names and phone numbers of all witnesses.
- Inspect the area where the accident took place, and consider taking pictures. If the accident was caused by a defect, rope off the area to avoid further incidents. Do not repair the defect until an insurance representative has had time to investigate.
- Do not accept liability or commit to paying incurred expenses. While it is natural to express concern for the injured, we should not comment regarding fault or negligence.
- Notify your insurance representative about the accident promptly, relaying all available information.

Medical emergency

- Offer CPR or other intervention measures as necessary.
- If the medical condition appears to be serious, call for emergency medical help.
- Look for an emergency medical information and/or identification card on the ill person.
- If the person is a minor, contact the parents.
- Delegate someone to be in the parking lot to direct the emergency personnel coming to the scene.

Fire

- Pull the closest fire alarm to initiate building evacuation.
- Call 911 to report the emergency. Give the street address for the building, the current status of the fire, and your name and phone number. Follow the directions of the 911 responder.
- If possible, close all doors to the immediate area of the fire to isolate smoke and fire.
- Make sure the building has been evacuated, as long as you can do so without endangering yourself.
- Do not use elevators.
- Exit the building using the closest possible evacuation route.

Hurricane/Tornado

- Appoint someone to use your location's weather alert station to monitor the approach and severity of the weather system.
- Close all doors and instruct those present to move away from any windows.
- If possible, take shelter in a basement. Next best options are an interior halls on the lowest or ground floor, or restrooms without windows.
- Avoid areas such as lobbies, walkways, end or exterior rooms in one-story buildings, rooms with large glass areas, or hallways that could become "wind tunnels."

As believers, our trust is anchored in Jesus Christ. Preparing for emergency situations in no way indicates a lack of trust in His ability to preserve and protect us—we are confident that He is able to do so. However, we also recognize that we live in a world marred by sin and the effects of the curse. Potential dangers are real and must be addressed, but we can lean on God to guide us in making adequate preparations and in responding appropriately to crises.

[1] Safety policies and emergency procedures for Apostolic Faith churches can be found in the *Apostolic Faith Church Safety and Security Manual* which is available on the church website. All pastors and ministers in the organization should be familiar with this manual, and ensure that its guidelines are implemented in their local church.

Public Safety Issues

As pastors and ministers in the Apostolic Faith organization, we have a great responsibility in terms of public safety issues toward those who come to our churches. It is incumbent upon us to take necessary precautions to ensure the security of attendees at all times.[1]

The term "public safety" encompasses a wide range of components. The place of worship where each of us serves is unique in its setting and vulnerabilities, and so are the members and their concerns. However, there are certain aspects of public safety which apply to many of our Apostolic Faith churches and are a part of providing a secure, protected environment for those who attend services. Sound policies in these areas will lessen our organization's susceptibility to legal claims.

Bus/Van Ministry

If our church has an outreach ministry which involves the use of a bus or van, our primary concern must be getting children to and from our church safely. Guidelines regarding vehicle use can help to prevent mishaps.

- Inspect and maintain all church-owned vehicles to ensure proper function and safety.
- Ensure that drivers for the church meet the requirements and have completed the training outlined in the *Apostolic Faith Safety and Security Manual.*
- Make sure that drivers have been instructed in backing up, loading/unloading passengers, breakdown procedures, and guidelines for passenger behavior.
- Insist that drivers comply with the laws regarding vehicle use, as well as with insurance restrictions and regulations.
- Check with the vehicle insurance company periodically on aspects of safety and liability.
- Make sure all van passengers take a seat and stay in it, and that all passengers wear seat belts.
- Arrange the bus routes so children get on and off the right side of the bus and do not have to cross a street.
- Appoint a bus escort (an adult other than the driver) to help each child get on and off the bus safely.
- Keep a list of all approved and trained drivers, and do not make exceptions.

Health and Wellness Issues

We have an obligation to take precautions that protect health and wellness of those who come to our churches. For example, the church kitchen contains hazards which can cause burns, scalds, food poisoning, slipping, cuts, and many other accidents. To avoid such incidents, we should:

- Ensure that all state regulations regarding food preparation and service are followed.
- Ascertain that working smoke alarms are installed in the church kitchen area and are inspected on a regular basis.
- If possible, utilize a dishwasher to be certain that dishes and utensils are properly sanitized.
- Make sure that a first aid kit and appropriate fire-fighting equipment are located in or near the kitchen.
- Restrict children from access to the kitchen.

In addition, we should also implement the following in other areas of the church.

- Obtain information regarding children in your Sunday school who have food allergies, alert teach-

ers and staff, and implement procedures to protect them.

- Make sure your staff and volunteers are trained in how to respond in the event of an allergic reaction or other health emergencies.
- Establish guidelines for thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting surfaces in the nurseries, restrooms, and kitchen of your church.
- Keep first aid and cleaning supplies out of the reach of children, preferably in locked cupboards.
- Keep a current list of members of your church who have medical or emergency response training, and do your best to make sure one of them is available during church gatherings. If no one qualifies, it may be advisable to have one or two staff members acquire basic first aid and CPR training.

Privacy Issues

A church can be vulnerable to charges of invasion of privacy and infliction of emotional distress if it makes public information that should be kept private. Thus, it is very important that we maintain the confidentiality of communication and documentation. Only those having a legitimate need to know such information should have access to the records. The one exception to maintaining confidentiality relates to child abuse reporting.

Employment Practices

Churches are not exempt from having legal challenges from employees, but good workplace practices will reduce the likelihood that an employment-related lawsuit will be filed. If your church employs staff on a regular or part-time basis, it is prudent to take steps to deal with challenges that could arise. To address the risk of such claims, you should:

- Become familiar with employment laws, and employ and terminate employees according to state/federal laws.
- Ascertain whether your workplace environment is subject to OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) regulations and requirements regarding workplace safety.[2]
- Comply with IRS (Internal Revenue Service) requirements.[3]
- Keep confidential personnel files on each employee.

Clergy Conduct

Our conduct as pastors and ministers must be impeccable and characterized by utmost integrity in order to protect our standing before God, our testimonies, and our organization. This will entail approaching every circumstance with wisdom and due caution, especially when dealing with members of the opposite gender.[4]

Counseling. There are a number of legal concerns that should be considered in relation to the counseling done by pastors in our work. For that reason, we highly recommend putting in place safeguards related to counseling.[5]

Although working with individuals who are facing troubling circumstances is a necessary part of our ministry, what we offer is based on our understanding of the Bible and its teachings. We do *not* engage in the practice of psychology, professional counseling, or psychotherapy, even if we are legally licensed to do so. Every minister should have a clear understanding of those cases that need to be referred to licensed professionals for counseling, keeping in mind that our role is simply to offer the counsel of the Lord.

Any intimation that a counselee is suicidal should be treated as a serious and urgent matter; we must never disregard warning signs in this regard. We should refer a potentially suicidal person to a qualified professional for immediate help. It is advisable in such cases to document our recommendations to the person in written form at the time they are made, and follow up to make sure that the individual obtains the help they need.

Sexual Misconduct. It is critically important that our lives are morally above reproach. Although anyone can be accused of an inappropriate remark or improper conduct when dealing with members of the opposite gender, we lessen our susceptibility in this regard by acting with utmost caution and integrity in all situations.

As ministers, we often meet with our parishioners when they are vulnerable—for example, times of illness, death, or crisis. We need to be aware that what we regard as simply comforting care can be misunderstood, so healthy boundaries are imperative to maintain the integrity of the ministerial relationship. Taking the following steps will help guard against charges of harassment or sexual misconduct:

- Make maintaining the health of our own marriages a top priority.
- Be uncompromisingly honest with ourselves and others.
- Avoid very personal or intimate conversations with those of the opposite gender. If a counselee is in emotional distress, we must especially be vigilant about not prolonging the conversation. When emotions are near the surface, people are vulnerable.
- Avoid being alone with those of the opposite gender, remembering Paul's injunction to "abstain from all appearance of evil" (1Thessalonians 5:22). Put in place safeguards such as an open door with others nearby and aware that a session is taking place.
- Stay alert to any signals that indicate proper boundaries are being ignored.
- Avoid making even seemingly "harmless" compliments to those of the opposite gender. They can easily be misconstrued.

Child/Youth Risk Management

Since children are among the most defenseless of all those who attend our services, we have a special duty to make sure they are protected and safe within the church environment. Sadly, child predators often involve themselves in churches. While it is part of our Christian character to want to extend grace and trust, we must also exercise a great deal of caution in this matter. One incident of abuse or molestation could have devastating consequences for the child, the family, and the church.

We should be aware that victims of molestation who have sued a church often allege that the organization was negligent in not adequately screening volunteers or staff, or for not providing adequate supervision. Every pastor can take certain steps to protect children in our churches. These steps should include:

- Properly screen anyone who will work in the same area as minors.
- Establish a two-adult rule, requiring a minimum of two workers with children at all times.
- Restrict teens from supervising children in the absence of an adult.
- Install windows in classroom and office doors and make it a policy that they remain unobstructed by blinds or curtains. Doors without glass should remain open.
- Establish restroom use guidelines that allow only parents and approved childcare workers to care for children.
- Release minors from church activities only to the parent or legal guardian, or to a third person authorized by the parent or guardian.
- Warn youth workers to be extremely cautious about even casual physical contact with a minor child in their care.
- Take seriously any allegation made by a child. Investigate all claims immediately in accordance with the guidelines mandated in the organization's safety policy.
- Instruct church ushers to be observant regarding strangers, and especially watchful when unsupervised children are in the halls or other areas of the church.

- Understand and abide by state law to report known or reasonably suspected incidents of abuse. Be aware that ministers are "mandatory reporters," meaning that they can be held criminally liable for failing to report.

Conclusion

To avoid claims and legal challenges, church leaders and staff members must make every effort to behave with integrity and caring toward both members and the general public. A church that is faithful to its mission and diligent in pursuing the safety and well-being of those who attend is also likely to satisfy its legal obligations.

[1] More detailed information about safety policies and emergency procedures for Apostolic Faith churches can be found in the *Apostolic Faith Church Safety and Security Manual* and in the *Volunteer Handbook*, which are available on the church website.

[2] OSHA regulations cover all private-sector employers with one or more workers in all states and U.S. territories. The term "private sector employer" applies to any business with one or more employees engaged in a commercial or noncommercial activity that affects commerce. This definition includes not-for-profit organizations. For churches and other religious organizations, OSHA regulations make a distinction between secular and religious activities. Secular activities, such as private schools operated by religious organizations, are covered under the definition of "employer." But religious activities, such as those performed during services, are not covered by OSHA regulations.

[3] See the section of this manual titled *Tax and Financial Issues* for more detailed information on this subject.

[4] For more information on behavioral guidelines and counseling see the topic in this manual titled *Conduct* in the section on Ministerial Identity.

[5] The section titled *Counseling* in this manual offers more detailed guidelines on this topic.

Counsel for Ministers

The policies and procedures given in the *Apostolic Faith Church Safety and Security Manual* apply to all services, activities, and events scheduled as part of the ministry of this organization. Paid staff members are required to read the manual; volunteers are required to read the *Volunteer Handbook*. Both the manual and the handbook are posted on our corporate website at www.apostolicfaith.org. It is the pastor's responsibility to ensure that new workers read the appropriate material.

Tax and Financial Issues

Every Apostolic Faith Church needs a foundation of up-to-date and accurate information regarding tax and financial issues. Local, state and federal government regulations are modified from year to year, and increasing liability, reports of clergy malpractice, and the risk of claims and potential lawsuits make it vital that we be aware of changing standards. Failure to stay informed in today's environment could lead to serious problems for both the Apostolic Faith organization and its leaders.

As branch church pastors, we are accountable to headquarters. Each pastor and local congregation is expected to follow the financial policies and guidelines established by the Apostolic Faith organization.[1] Then, if questions pertaining to fiscal management arise, the staff at headquarters will be able to verify that matters have been handled according to established procedure. This not only protects those of us who have leadership roles in the church, but also the church's reputation in the community, and the organization as a whole.

Financial integrity is a requirement. We should keep financial records with the thought in mind that a third party will examine them at some point. This means being clear and consistent in our notation method, and making sure that all entries are complete and accurate. Remember that personal bills are not to be paid using church funds.

Pastors in the United States submit monthly financial reports to headquarters which provide details of income and disbursements. Assigned accounts should be set up for all recurring expenses and most non-recurring expenses. Miscellaneous/other expenses must be kept to a minimum, as this is the first place where accountants or auditors look for impropriety; anything recorded in that category must be properly explained and documented.

While pastors are the primary financial officer for each congregation, the services of a certified public accountant or tax advisor should be utilized as needed. Their role would include assisting us to do the following:

- Comply with IRS requirements so as not to jeopardize the church's tax exempt status.
- Understand the implications of federal law impacting churches and ministers.
- Assist with appropriate accounting structure and implementation.
- Handle payroll and related tax duties.
- Be compliant with regulations that govern charitable contributions.
- Establish a legal context for decision-making.
- Stay informed concerning church and ministerial liability issues, property and zoning requirements, estate handling, payroll tax procedures, etc.

[1] For more information, see the sections of this manual titled *Oversight of Church Finances* and *Personal Financial Stewardship.*

Insurance Issues

Every week, thousands of people walk through the doors of Apostolic Faith churches around the world. In addition, our network of branches sponsors a wide range of ministry-related activities. In spite of precautions we take to protect our church properties and congregations, from time to time accidents likely will occur and property will be damaged. In some of these cases, there is a potential for liability claims to be made.

In the United States, churches generally are not given any special immunity by the courts when confronted with legal challenges related to liability issues. As an organization, we must adequately protect our members, properties, and the church's assets against the negative consequences of litigation. Although insurance is a valuable tool in accomplishing this, it can never be a substitute for proper safety and security safeguards.

There are two primary types of insurance: property and liability.

Property insurance covers damage, destruction, loss, or theft of the buildings and physical property owned by the organization. Generally, the amount carried by each local church is determined jointly by headquarters and the pastor of the branch, and is based upon legal requirements and the local congregation's resources.

Liability insurance covers actions resulting in loss or damage that could leave the church liable, and includes protection against claims related to bodily or personal injury. In the United States, all properties titled to the Apostolic Faith Church must be insured at the proper level of liability as required by law and approved by headquarters, and adequate liability coverage must be maintained while the properties and vehicles are in operation.

It can be a challenging task to assess the various risks each local church faces, inventory the church's properties and assets, and arrange for appropriate coverage. Pastors in the United States should arrange for a regular review of their church's assets in order to be sure that additions to properties are included in the insurance policy, changes to circumstances addressed, and adequate coverage maintained.

In countries outside of the United States, insurance matters should be handled under the oversight of the Regional Directors and District Superintendents.

Counsel to Ministers

Detailed information or answers to specific questions regarding insurance at your location can be obtained by contacting headquarters. From time to time, current instructions or information related to insurance coverage will be made available on the Ministers page of the corporate website at www.apostolicfaith.org.

Physical Property Issues

Our organization has a significant investment in physical property. As pastors, we have a responsibility to manage church properties in a manner that protects our work from legal challenges or claims to the best of our abilities.[1]

Legal action regarding real property owned by a church most often occurs in relation to the following areas. However, positive steps can be taken to minimize risk.

Building security. Install an alarm system that reports break-ins to a central station. Store all yard and other equipment in a secure place. Make sure lighting around the church is adequate, and lock the facility after each service. Keep track of who has keys to the church. Since the premises are particularly vulnerable during times when no services are being held, you may wish to arrange to have the church checked routinely.

Fire prevention. Have the fire sprinkler, heating, electrical, and air-conditioning systems checked on a regular schedule. Be sure power surge protectors are used on all electronic devices in the church. Fire exits should be well-marked and obstruction-free. Keep smoke detectors and fire extinguishers in good working order.

Adequate supervision. Negligence in terms of appropriate supervision is a common cause for litigation against a church. Make sure that any youth activities sponsored by the church, either on or off the church premises, have adequate supervision. If you are uncertain regarding what the staff/child ratio should be, contact your insurer or a school or daycare in your community and ask what ratio they use.

Safety hazards. Conduct regularly scheduled inspection of church facilities, grounds, and equipment to ensure safety and reduce risks. Identify any existing or potential safety hazards and rectify them. Install handrails on both sides of all stairs. Make sure stairs, hallways, and parking areas are well lit. Document what safety improvements have been made. The church can be held accountable for accidents caused by dangers that were known to exist on the property. Warning signs that are prominently posted can reduce the risk of avoidable injury, and lessen the chance of church liability.

Property acquisition and financing. Exercise extreme care in the acquisition of all real property. Check with local authorities regarding zoning or land use regulations, as these may prohibit building on certain properties or expanding facilities on properties the church already owns. Weigh the benefits, risks, costs, and obligations related to accepting gifts of real property. There are specific statutes concerning church real estate holdings, so it is advisable to consult with an attorney or a real estate professional accustomed to working with churches in these circumstances.

Volunteer laborers. Church remodeling or construction projects are often undertaken by volunteers, and steps must be taken to reduce the risk of injury during such projects. Make sure that the project is not too complex for volunteers to handle, and that those who participate are qualified. Apprise volunteers of safety procedures and make sure they are properly instructed in their tasks. Provide and oversee use of all necessary safety devices and equipment. Do not allow volunteers to operate vehicles for which an operator's license is required unless they have been duly certified. Finally, check with your insurance agent regarding coverage for volunteers and to make sure all potential liability exposures have been addressed.

[1] Specific guidelines regarding facility safety can be found in the *Apostolic Faith Church Safety and Security Manual*, which is available on the church website. All pastors and ministers in the organization should be familiar with this manual, and ensure that its guidelines are implemented in their local church.

Copyright Issues

One legal issue that requires careful consideration by pastors and members of Apostolic Faith Churches is that of compliance with copyright laws.[1] A copyright gives the creator or owner of an original work the sole right to decide how their work may be reproduced, distributed, performed, displayed, or adapted.[2] This impacts churches because the law applies to pieces of music (hymns, oratorios, cantatas, etc.) that would typically be presented in the church setting, to literary or dramatic works that might be used in various programs, to pre-recorded motion pictures (including DVDs, Blu-Rays, and movie streams/downloads), and to recordings of presentations done in the church which include copyrighted material. Each of our churches should set up procedures to ensure that its members are not guilty of copyright infringement.

There are two primary areas where musicians must exercise vigilance: reproduction rights (copying of music), and performance rights (singing or playing the music in public). The fact that violations sometimes occur unknowingly is not a legal defense. It is incumbent upon each pastor to make sure the musicians and others who use copyrighted works in the church are both knowledgeable about the law and in full compliance with it.

The holder of a copyright can often be found by looking for the copyright notice, which will consist of the word *Copyright* (or the symbol ©), a year, and the name of the copyright owner. The absence of this information, however, does not necessarily indicate that no copyright exists. The piece may be part of a collection in which the copyright is notated elsewhere in the publication.

Material not protected by copyright is considered to be part of the "public domain," a category that also covers works for which the copyright has expired. Materials published before 1923 in the United States are in the public domain unless the copyright was renewed, so such materials can legally be copied, adapted, and performed without permission.

Permission to use copyrighted materials can be obtained in several ways. First, a representative of the church can write directly to the holder of the copyright and ask permission. Another option is to use a service such as the *Copyright Clearance Center* at copyright.com, which allows applicants to request permission for several pieces at one time.

We must also be cautious that our proposed use of copyrighted materials falls within the category of acceptable use. Musicians should carefully read the labels and notices on published materials to see what they can and cannot do without permission from the copyright owner. When uncertain as to whether a proposed use of a piece of music is allowable, they should make inquiries. For example, permission for use should be requested from the publisher if the intent is to:

- compile lyrics in a song sheet,
- arrange a number for a vocal ensemble,
- copy out-of-print music for an accompanist,[3]
- make a video of a children's program, or
- make an electronic recording of a number.

Another option that is becoming increasingly popular is to use a service, such as Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI).[4] This organization offers a variety of copyright licensing services specifically directed toward church activity, including music and video licenses. The church pays a set amount for licensing each year (from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars, depending on the size of the congregation) and is then able to use all the works for which CCLI has obtained rights (currently, they have permission for over 150,000 songs). The contract allows the church to use most songs in visual presentations, projected visuals, song sheets, and church bulletins in Sunday school, church-sponsored retreats, and church services.

Licensees are required to make periodic reports documenting songs used. With this option, record keeping is involved, but this typically is a more practical option than obtaining permissions individually.

A very limited exemption in copyright law does allow for the playing or singing of religious music during church services without getting permission from the copyright owner, so long as the work is performed in the course of services, and at a place of worship. However, this exemption does not apply to services that are broadcast over radio, television, or the internet, nor does it cover performances given in a social or entertainment context rather than as part of a religious service.

Many of our churches are now webcasting their services, and in order to do this legally, a web license must be obtained.[5] Musicians and congregation members should be aware that putting copyrighted music up on YouTube is also not legal without permission.

In addition to the presentation and reproduction of music, there are other areas where care must be taken to abide by copyright law. As ministers, we must be cautious about including quotes in our sermons. If we wish to use a comment authored by another individual verbatim, we should credit our source.

In most cases, permission must be granted for any public showing of pre-recorded motion pictures and other audiovisual works, such as a film at a fellowship event, retreat, or seminar. Violations can result in substantial fines. Churches that use films occasionally may wish to look into obtaining a church video license through CCLI, which offers blanket copyright coverage for titles from more than five hundred producers. This is one of the most cost effective and convenient ways for religious organizations to protect themselves.

Churches that produce a newsletter or worship bulletin must be careful not to violate copyright law if they include passages of prose or poetry in their publications. If such quotes are not in the public domain, then each copy of the church publication could be considered a separate infringement upon a copyright.

In conclusion, a good guideline regarding copyright is this: If you wish to copy, change, record, duplicate, or reproduce copyrighted material in part or the whole, request permission from the copyright holder.[6]

[1] While copyright law varies around the world, copyrighted material owned by United States citizens is protected in many countries by those countries' copyright laws and treaties with the United States.

[2] Often, the owner of the copyright is the creator of the work. However, at times the owner is a publisher or organization that has been assigned the legal rights.

[3] The fact that a publication or piece of music is out of print does not mean that it can be freely copied without permission. "Out of print" simply means that printed copies of the publication are no longer available for purchase from the publisher. The piece itself may still be protected by copyright. If your church has a license with CCLI, you can obtain information about out-of-print music from that organization.

[4] Contact CCLI at: www.ccli.com, 1-800-234-2446, or by writing to 17205 SE Mill Plain Blvd, Suite 150, Vancouver, WA 98683. Be aware that the CCLI license does not grant the right to photocopy or duplicate any choral music, cantatas, musicals, keyboard arrangements, vocal solos, or instrumental works; it grants duplicating rights for congregational music only.

[5] This type of license can also be obtained from CCLI (see preceding footnote for contact information) or from Christian Copyright Solutions (CCS) at www.copyrightsolver.com, 877-947-9687, or by writing to P.O. Box 1252, Fairhope, Alabama 36533. Be aware that a CCLI webcast license only covers music of publishers on their list; CCS has a much broader base as it covers the three big performing rights organizations: ASCAP, SESAC and BMI.

[6] See the Ministers page of our website at www.apostolicfaith.org for helpful links with more complete information about copyright law for churches.

Counsel for Ministers

Misunderstanding and/or apathy regarding copyright law can be dangerous. Copyright infringement not only makes the church liable, but it is also unethical. We ask that our churches destroy unauthorized photocopies and recordings, and replace them with legal editions.