

THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST
U.S.A., INC.

STATEMENT OF CORE BELIEFS,
COMMITMENTS TO GOOD
CONDUCT
AND
CHURCH PRACTICES

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Church of Pentecost has since its inception in 1953 as an offshoot of the ministry of the late James McKeown, stood and stands now for Biblical principles in doing church.

In the first few pages of this booklet are given the Mission and Vision statements and Beliefs or Statement of Faith of the church. They are what The Church of Pentecost holds on to everywhere in the world. They are what we believe to be the basic doctrinal statement of a true Pentecostal Movement. They are scripturally based.

This booklet also contains the acceptable practices of The Church of Pentecost Worldwide but adapted to suit the situation in the United States of America. The roots of these church practices go down deeply through the entire history of the church and they have been compiled over the past years, having been shaped by the spiritual, religious, historical and cultural experiences of the leaders and members alike.

May I sound a warning note here. The practices as enshrined in this book, unlike the doctrines are not cast in stone. Just as factors of history and culture have influenced their shape, so they are subject to change under the influence of change in the dynamics of society and culture. We would not hesitate unduly to change some of the ways we do things as and when they become necessary. Of course such change would be taken to the Lord in prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The purpose for which this booklet has been published is that we would like to ensure that our manner of doing church is near uniform in the congregations found throughout the United States. It is imperative on the part of leaders to guide those who serve in the household of God to do so in accordance with laid down procedures. For the Church of Pentecost, like a mighty river, grows rapidly and in the process accepts many new converts and members of other Christian denominations into her fold. The likelihood of such members doing their own thing in the church, contrary to the acceptable norms of practice in the Church of Pentecost is high. We believe this document will guide old and new members alike to know what to do in any event.

We would therefore entreat all Pastors and other officers – Elders, Deacons and Deaconesses to be abreast with the contents of this book and demonstrate the ability to interpret and implement its contents. In the event of doubt, officers are advised to consult the Pastor.

Finally, the National Executive Council expresses profound gratitude to the Constitutional Review Committee chaired by Pastor Sampson Ofori-Yiadom for the many hours expended in sifting through historical records, interviewing individuals and succeeding in compiling the contents of this document. Theirs is a great service rendered to The Church of Pentecost and the Lord Jesus Christ, Owner and Master of the church. May they find favor with the Lord and be blessed by Him. It is

also our prayer that all who use this book would seek to please the Lord in doing church.

Thank you.

National Council

2. MISSION STATEMENT

The Church of Pentecost exists to evangelize, care for and lead peoples of all nations to maturity in Christ based on the apostolic doctrine.

3. VISION STATEMENT

- a. To evangelize and plant self-supporting churches both within and outside USA.
- b. To ensure that the Kingdom of God is established in men and women who portray Christ-like character.
- c. To provide a conducive environment to attract and retain people from all walks of life
- d. To send and support missionaries on a regular basis.
- e. To provide infrastructural facilities to accommodate and to develop a pragmatic and efficient pastorate/lay leadership through appropriate training programs. -i.e. chapels, mission houses, offices, conference centers, educational facilities, etc.
- f. To grow in membership
- g. To provide charity to needy individuals, communities and institutions.
- h. To cooperate with and support the government with prayers.
- i. To strengthen bonds of fellowship with other sister churches and Para-church groups.

4. CORE BELIEFS OF THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST

The Tenets of the Church (Core Beliefs) are as follows:

a. *The Bible:*

We believe in the divine inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures. That it is infallible in its declaration, final in its authority, all sufficient in its provision and comprehensive in its sufficiency. (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21)

b. *The One True God:*

We believe the existence of the one true God, Elohim, Maker of the whole universe; indefinable but revealed as Triune Godhead- Father, Son and Holy Spirit – One in nature, essence and attributes; Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent. (Genesis 1:1; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

c. *Man's Depraved Nature:*

We believe that “all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God” and are subject to eternal punishment; and need repentance and regeneration. (Genesis 3:1-19; Isaiah 53:6)

d. *The Savior:*

We believe that man's need of a Savior has been met in the person of Jesus Christ, because of His deity, virgin birth, sinless life, atoning death, resurrection and ascension; His abiding intercession and second coming to judge the living and the dead. (Matthew 1:21; John 4:42; Ephesians 5:23; Philippians 2:6-11)

e. *Repentance, Justification, Sanctification:*

We believe all men have to repent of and confess their sins before God and believe in the

vicarious death of Jesus Christ to be justified before God. We believe in the sanctification of the believer through the working of the Holy Spirit and in God's gift of Eternal Life to the believer. (Luke 15:7; Acts 2:38; Romans 4:25; 5:16; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 1 Thessalonians 4:3)

f. The Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper:

We believe in the Sacrament of Baptism by immersion as a testimony of a convert who has attained a responsible age of about 15 years. (Infants and children are not Baptized and but are dedicated to the Lord). We believe in the Sacraments of the Lord's Supper, which should be partaken of by all members who are in full fellowship. (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:16; Luke 22:19-20)

g. Baptism, Gifts and Fruit of the Holy Spirit:

We believe in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit for believers with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues, with signs following; and in the operation of the gifts and the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. (Mark 16:17; Acts 2:4; 1 Corinthians 12:8-11; Galatians 5:22-23)

h. The Second Coming and the Next Life:

We believe in the Second Coming of Christ and the Resurrection of both the saved and the unsaved; they that are saved to the resurrection of life – and the unsaved to the resurrection of damnation. (Mark 13:26; Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29; Acts 1:11; 10:42; Romans 2:7-11; 6:23)

i. *Tithes and Offering:*

We believe in tithes and in giving of free-will offering towards the cause of carrying forward the Kingdom of God. We believe that God blesses a cheerful giver. (Genesis 14:18-20; 28:20-22; Malachi 3:6-10; Matthew 23:23; Acts 20:35; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; 2 Corinthians 9:1-9)

j. *Diving Healing:*

We believe that God's will to heal is revealed in Scriptures. However, we do not oppose the application of medicine or medical technology by qualified medical practitioners for healing purposes. (2 Kings 20:7; Matthew 9:12; Luke 10:34; Colossians 4:14)

5. PRACTICAL COMMITMENTS

a. *Evangelism*

It is the presentation of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit with the view that men will come and trust Jesus as Savior and Lord and serve him in the fellowship of the Church. Evangelism is the responsibility of every Church member. It is the prime duty of every believer to share his/her faith after conversion. Evangelism is missions-oriented; farmers, women, artisans, fishermen. As was the practice of the founder, Pastor James Mckeown, we respond to calls to missions as led by the Spirit of the Lord.

b. *Discipleship*

Discipleship is training believers to be like Christ. The Emphasis is on holiness, righteousness, faithfulness, honesty,

Prayerfulness and the leading of disciplined and responsible lives. This is done on one-on-one level, where members take the responsibility of discipling their new converts, as well as through church/corporate based systematic teaching, and on-the-job training. Teachings emphasize the four-square gospel, which is Christ-centered: i.e. Jesus the Savior, healer, Baptizer, and Soon Coming King; the Tenets of the Church; Bible reading/study and scripture memorizing and application of the word to life situation.

c. Ministry Excellence

We seek to honor God who gave his best (the Savior) by holding in high esteem the Holy Scriptures. That it is infallible in its declaration, final in its authority, all sufficient in its provisions and comprehensive in its sufficiency.

d. The Holy Spirit

- i. We believe in the person of the Holy Spirit and that the Christian Life can be led only with His grace.
- ii. The new birth is through the Holy Spirit, and then the baptism of the Holy Spirit for power to serve and the gifts of the Spirit for building the body of Christ.
- iii. The Holy Spirit helps the individual to develop Christ- like character, manifest through the fruit of the spirit.
- iv. The leading of the Holy Spirit in all spheres of activity in the Church is paramount.

Administrative structures and all other church distinctive practices have been by the leading of the Holy Spirit. In the Church, leadership at all levels co-operates in obedience.

6. CORE VALUES OR STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

- a. Holiness and Righteous Living (1 Peter 1:13-16).
- b. Christ-centered teachings (1 Corinthians 1:22-24).
- c. Prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
- d. Fellowship and Brotherly love (Act 2:42 & Hebrews 10:25).
- e. Tithing and Offering (Genesis 14:18-20; 28:20-23; Malachi 3:6-10; Matthew 23:23).
- f. Marriage and Family life (Hebrews 13:4; Ephesians 5:22-33; 6:1-4).
- g. Church Discipline (Hebrews 12:4-13 & Galatians 6:1-2).
- h. Regular prayer for the Holy Spirit Baptism with initial evidence of speaking in tongues. Emphasis is place on the fruit and gifts of the life of the believer.
- i. Prayer is said for healing and deliverance for the afflicted as part of the initial exercises for salvation.
- j. Services are marked as truly Pentecostal with praise and worship, teaching, exercise of gifts, prayer, testimony, etc.
- k. Leadership
Leadership development is based on the apostolic foundation. Appointments and callings into leadership positions are based on character and charisma, and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Leadership development is from the shop floor level, with members maturing to lead sub-groups, movements, assemblies, district and areas. Team spirit with talent development shapes team work. Ministry is by both clergy and laity.

7. COMMITMENT TO GOOD CONDUCT (2 Timothy 1:14-15)

- a. Set aside some period daily for personal quiet time in prayer and meditation on the word (Matt. 6:6-20).
- b. Be in your seat in good time and immediately start praying quietly before the commencement of the service, Gen. 18:19; Ex. 20:10; Jos. 24:15; Jn. 1:44-45; Acts 10:24)
- c. Endeavor, by word and deed, to bring up your children in the fear of the LORD, and bring them with you to the house of God. Supervise the Youth Ministry, as the case may be. Do not neglect the spiritual well- being of other relatives and house-helpers under your care; they also need salvation (Gen. 18; 19, Ex 20:10; Deut. 6:4-7; Jos. 24:15; Prov. 22:6; Jn. 1:44-45; 2 Tim. 1:5, 6).
- d. Make the Pastor your personal friend. He needs your sympathy, support and counsel as you need his. Constantly pray for him (Joel 2:17 Mal 2:17; Mal.2:7; Rom. 15:30-32; 2 Cor. 1:11; Eph. 6:19 Heb. 13:17, 18)
- e. Make the Church your spiritual home. Love the brethren with brotherly affection and, if it is possible, contribute to the needs of the saints – (Ps. 133:1; Acts 2:46-47 Phil. 7).

- f. During casual conversation at home or at work, do not speak disrespectfully or disparagingly about the Church and God's servants especially Officers and Pastors (Prov. 22:8; Hos. 8:7; Gal 6:7).
- g. Endeavor to study the Bible diligently on your own and take it with you any time you go to the House of God. (Jos. 1:8; Ezra 7:10; Ps. 1:2; Ps. 119:16, 72; Acts 7:11; Rom 15:4; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16).
- h. Always endeavor to adequately prepare yourself through prayer and dedication before coming to the house of God (Heb. 4:15-16)
- i. Unite with a faithful, sound, wide-awake, and mission minded church, one that is doing things for the Lord and where the Pastor/Elder preaches Christ in the fullest sense of the Word, when you happen to be in a city where there's no Church of Pentecost.
- j. Be a tither – Give one-tenth of your income to the Lord in your local church. (Mal. 3:10; Prov. 11:25; Matt. 6:21).
- k. Support Missions work with all your heart, interest, prayers and gifts and GO if He calls (Acts 1:8; Matt 13:34).
- l. Keep your eyes on Jesus, not on preachers, churches or things (Matt. 17:8)
- m. Be a soul-winner. This is the greatest of joys and thrills next to being saved. (John. 1:41-50)
- n. Choose your companions carefully and prayerfully (1 Cor. 15:33) you are now a pilgrim and a sojourner (one traveling to his home country). So don't allow anything to turn you aside or cause you to settle down in the world (1 Pet. 2:11; 1:17; Heb. 11:13-15)

- o. Since your home and citizenship are now Heaven, live your life here on earth to befit that home. (Phil. 3:20)
- p. Live, work, pray and vote for those things that will make your community and country more righteous and God-honoring (Tit. 3:12)
- q. Recognize and be obedient to the Church, workplace, home, school, local, state and national Government, except when it is contrary to God's word and will for you (1 Pet. 2:13-19).
- r. Read only good literature – books, magazines, periodicals. Stay away from Western, blues and pornography or sex stories, etc. (1 Pet. 1:13; 1 Tim. 4:13)
- s. Don't let man's theories, whether in textbooks or otherwise, shake your faith in the bible as God's Word (Mat. 24:25; Ps. 119:89). All facts and findings of science prove rather than disprove the Bible.
- t. Always carry tracts with you for distribution during the day (Ps. 126:6).
- u. Watch your home life. Be your best for Christ there in all things (Eph. 6:1-4).
- v. Make your concerns and grievances known to the appropriate authority for explanation or redress (3 Jn. 9-10; Num. 12:1, 2).
- w. Enter the place of worship reverently; pray fervently; listen attentively; give praise from a grateful heart and worship God in the beauty of Holiness (Ps. 118:27; Eccl. 5:1; Rom. 7:12; Jas.1:19. "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise; be thankful unto him bless His name"(Ps.100:4)

- x. Marital fidelity and chastity before marriage are the hallmarks of a true Christian and are, therefore, strongly urged upon every child of God. Pre-marital and extra-marital relationships have no place in the church; members found in such relationships will be punished by suspension and/or withdrawal from fellowship (1 Cor. 7:2; Heb. 13:4).
- y. In your private business, endeavor to make all your dealings and transactions Bible-Based, honest and transparent (Prov. 16:8; 21:6; Jer. 17:11; 22:13). A true Child of God may not deal in items known to be detrimental to the spiritual, mental and physical health of others e.g. alcohol, cigarettes and other narcotic drugs.
- z. Have a personal testimony of your salvation in Christ (Acts 4:12; Rom. 10:9).
- aa. Acknowledge and be obedient to the order of the Church – Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, Elders and Deacons (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4; 11; Heb 13:17).
- bb. Be present in the meetings of the Church and participate in the Communion Services; that is, not to absent for more than three times from partaking Communion without sufficient reason given for your abstinence (Heb. 10:25).
- cc. Conform with the fundamental Doctrines of the Church, as well as with the two ordinances, namely, Baptism by Immersion and the Lord's Supper. Make sure you are baptized by immersion in water. (Luke 12:19; Rom 6:4 1 Cor. 11:24; II Jn. 1:9).

- dd. Contribute towards the support of the cause of Christ as taught in the Word of God (Gen. 14:20; 18:22; Lev. 17:30; 1 Chron. 19:14; Matt 23:23; 1 Cor. 16:2; Heb. 7:8, 17).
- ee. Keep the counsels of the Church in the Church and do not divulge them to outsiders (Matt. 7:6).
- ff. Pray for and help every member, remembering that we are joint members in the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:25; Gal 6:2; 1 Tim. 2:1; Heb. 10: 24).
- gg. Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3).

8. CHURCH CULTURE

The following distinctive characteristics help identify The Church of Pentecost:

- a. Self-supporting attitude
- b. Faithfulness and Integrity – qualities of all officers and ministers.
- c. Distinctively a praying church.
- d. Church discipline without fear or favor irrespective of position, race or color of members.
- e. Place of worship based on Spirit and Truth and not necessarily on the Template.
- f. Fellowship and liberality.
- g. Respect for authority.
- h. Mutual respect and sense of belonging for all members without discrimination based on tribalism, racism, or nationality.
- i. Sacrificial service to the Church without expecting pecuniary reward as much as possible.
- j. Total abstinence from alcohol, tobacco and other hard drugs.

- k. Neighborhood Churches: Small/medium-sized Neighborhood churches encourage church planting. Where necessary mega churches are encouraged.
- l. Monogamous marriage is enforced as well as chastity before marriage.
- m. Homosexuality, lesbianism and other perverse sexual practice is not permitted in the church.
- n. The Church upholds paternal inheritance.
- o. Tithes/offering. Faithfulness in giving offerings and paying tithes to enhance ministry of the Church is emphasized. Periodic teaching on this subject is regarded as very important.
- p. Social Activities. The Church believes in communal living with members supporting one another, and participating in communal work. The Church may also help the entire community by providing social needs such as health services, schools, as well as donation to the needy in society.
- q. Holiness of members and officers unto the Lord (Rom.12: 1; Heb. 12:14).

9. DUTIES OF CHURCH OFFICERS

a. Elders

- i. They are responsible for leading the Church in prayer and for teaching the Word of God.
- ii. They are “custodians of the faith”, That is, they guard jealously the fundamental doctrines of the Church, in order that no unscriptural teachings may be passed on by others to the Saints.

- iii. They have the responsibility of visiting the sick and afflicted saints. They are to know all members in the Church and if possible visit them in their homes from time to time (in large assemblies say twice a year).
- iv. In the absence of the minister, they administer the Lord's Supper on the Lord's Day.
- v. They see to it that moral discipline is kept in the Church.
- vi. They help settle differences amongst the saints. They report the misconduct of sinning saints to the minister, who will suspend from membership unrepentant sinning members.
- vii. They are to help conduct Church services, tarry meetings, and open- air services, naming or christening services.
- viii. They are responsible for the acquisition of Lands and other properties for the local Church and report to the District Minister or Area Deacon.
- ix. They are responsible for the burial of deceased members in the absence of a minister.
- x. They see to maintain Church discipline (1 Cor. 6:1-3; Tit. 1:13).
- xi. They are to be punctual at Church services.
- xii. They are to be approachable but firm and fair.
- xiii. They are to read and study the Bible so as to receive "Rhema" for the members.

b. Presiding Elder

The Presiding Elder is the one who, whilst being actively engaged in fulfilling the above duties, is responsible to see that the other Elders, Deacons and Deaconesses are carrying out their duties in a proper manner.

- i. In the absence of the minister, he takes the Chair at Church services, crusades, tarry meetings and Elders' meetings.
- ii. The Presiding Elder, however, is not superior in authority to the other Elders; their divine calling is the same. However, he is a "primus inter pares".
- iii. They see to it that all financial returns are paid on time to the appropriate quarters. They also ensure that all written reports of the local church and organs within it are submitted to the appropriate quarters on time.

c. Deacons

- i. They are responsible for keeping and marking the Church Register. They report to the appropriate authorities consistent absence from church services of church members.
- ii. They are responsible for material arrangements connected with church gatherings, e.g. arrangement of chairs, attending to the lighting and sound systems.

- iii. They are responsible for arranging the chairs in the Church before weekday gatherings, and taking care of and inspecting regularly all property in the building belonging to the Church, e.g. notice board, tambourines, etc. The responsible deacon draws up an inventory of all Church property and checks it from time to time.
- iv. They are responsible for seeing to it that the Hymn Books are brought out before each Sunday morning gathering and they check them after the service.
- v. Deacons are ever on the alert to see that everyone is well seated and they are very active in making all preparations, etc., so that the guests and others may feel at home.
- vi. As the Deacons of old, it is expected that Deacons will engage themselves in spiritual duties as often as the occasion arises. They may be called upon to preach or teach from time to time or lead the chorus (singing) before meetings begin. Deacons distribute tracts, when these are available at crusades and evangelistic outreaches.
- vii. When conventions are held locally Deacons see to it that material preparations are fully made for the event.
- viii. At Water Baptismal services, the Deacons are responsible for seeing to it that all the needs of the male candidates both before and after immersion are adequately met.

- ix. Deacons may be called upon to perform, from time to time, other duties not specifically mentioned above.
- x. Deacons serve at the Lord's Table (Acts 6:1-6).

d. Deaconesses

- i. Deaconesses are responsible for doing much of the visiting, especially amongst the sisters, and taking every opportunity to visit the sick, backsliders, etc.
- ii. Preparation of the Lord's Table is the responsibility of the Deaconesses.
- iii. They are also prepared to minister the gospel as the occasion arises in the various assemblies from time to time.
- iv. They direct and instruct female converts who come to surrender to Christ.
- v. At Water Baptismal services, the Deaconesses see to it that the needs of the female converts, both before and after immersion, are adequately catered for. Deaconesses advise female converts as to what suitable dress they should wear on such occasions.
- vi. During conventions held locally Deaconesses are included in committees set up to arrange for lodgings, food, etc.
- vii. The needs of the sisters in the assembly are prayerfully watched over by the Deaconesses; they impart much instruction to female members on such subjects as Dedication of Infants, marriage (problems), unseemly conduct, etc.

- viii. They encourage those who come to them with problems, using the word of God.
- ix. They participate actively in the local as well as the District Women's Movement work.
- x. They serve in the Mission House from time to time especially when visitors come during rallies, retreats, conventions and other times.
- xi. They mobilize the women in the church to work at the Mission House as and when necessary.

PRACTICES

10. NAMING OF CHILDREN

- a. This ceremony is held in the home or any convenient place, as determined by the Local Presbytery
- b. Illegitimate children are not officially christened at Church but are dedicated later.
- c. Offerings and freewill donations are taken at the ceremony.
- d. Elders are allowed to perform the naming of children

11. DEDICATION OF CHILDREN

This is done in the chapel. Only ministers perform the dedication of children.

12. WATER BAPTISM

- a. Converts are baptized as soon as possible.

- b. Baptism is administered upon the convert confessing Christ openly after this manner: "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. He died for my sins and resurrected for my justification. Therefore I accept Him as my lord and personal Savior."
- c. Regular baptismal services are encouraged in all Districts.
- d. Candidates are immersed once in water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- e. Baptismal Certificates are issued immediately or thereafter.
- f. The right-hand of fellowship is extended after taking converts through systematic new convert classes.
- g. Water baptism is performed by ministers or their appointees in the absence of the minister.

13. CHURCH REGISTER FOR EACH ASSEMBLY

- a. Every assembly maintains a register of names of all members. The presbytery examines the register periodically, at least twice a year. Computerization of this register has many advantages for the local assembly.
- b. Assets Register. Every assembly, district, area, movement, board and committee maintains a register in which all properties of the Church are recorded. The Register contains a list of items purchased with dates, cost and where applicable, name of donor. Copies of this register are sent to the district, area, and national offices.

14. FUNERALS

- a. Assemblies within a district are expected to attend a member's funeral. Other Districts may send delegates and or donations.
- b. Viewing. Viewing at funeral homes is encouraged.
- c. Duration. Funeral services do not usually last for more than three hours.
- d. Form of Service
 - i. Prayer is said at the commencement of the service
 - ii. Prayer of thanksgiving is said by a delegated individual at memorial and burial service instead of corporate worship.
 - iii. Donations to the bereaved family are encouraged.
 - iv. Polygamists/Suspended Members

Ministers may conduct funeral services of a polygamist who was converted to the church in that state or of a member suspended for any other reason. But no tribute or testimonies are given at such funeral services.
 - v. Members Suspended for Open Sin
 1. There is no formal memorial and burial service for those suspended due to open sin such as abortion, fornication, burglary, etc. However, pastors usually visit the bereaved family and encourage members to do likewise. Members who commit suicide are treated the same.

2. A pastor may officiate the burial of a second wife who dies provided she is not a suspended member.
- vi. Minister and Spouses
- Where a minister or minister's wife dies, all minister's and wives in the affected area do participate fully.
1. Ministers in other areas may attend but with the permission of their area heads.
 2. Former stations of the deceased minister or minister's wife are encouraged to be represented.
 3. Ministers who are not able to attend, due to this directive, are not regarded as non-sympathizers. They are encouraged to donate to the bereaved family.

15. CHURCH OFFICERS/MEMBERS

a. Calling of Officers

- i. The calling of an Elder or an officer is not the sole responsibility of the Pastor.
- ii. Before one is called into the office of an Elder or to become an Officer, the Pastor in charge of the assembly/District nominating the individual first consults the Local Presbytery or vice versa, before such 'qualified' candidate appears before the District/ Area Vetting Committee.

b. Ordination of Officers.

The Church accepts the New Testament practice of 'Laying on of hands' instead of using anointing oil during ordination of Ministers or Officers. Ordination is done by the Apostles and Prophets of the Church.

c. Officers Who Fall into open Sin

- i. In line with church discipline, if any officer falls into open sin and is suspended from membership and office, he or she may be reinstated to full membership, but may not be reinstated to his or her former position or office. Where reinstatement to officership becomes necessary, the national head may consult the National Executive Council before doing so.
- ii. Members. A member could be made an officer after restoration into full membership if found fit later.
- iii. Ministers . A Minister may be suspended and dismissed concurrently and later reinstated to full membership by the lifting of the suspension administered by the Executive Council. The Council will determine the wife's position.

d. Right of Appeal/ Review.

Right of appeal/review is made in accordance with the provision of the constitution.

e. Retirement of Local Officers

It is our practice that all office holders who complete their terms of office meritoriously are

given special awards like certificate of service, etc.

f. Lay Leaders/ Officers' Training

Lay Leaders and Officers are given functional Bible and Leadership training in order for them to be able to teach and lead church members effectively.

g. Mandatory Review of Reviewable Appointments

Every reviewable office or appointment is reviewed when due. There is either re-election or re-appointment as is determined by the constitution.

h. Number of Presbyters for an Assembly

This is determined by the District Executive Committee with approval from the Area Head.

i. Officers on Transfer from other Districts

i. Elders in good standing on transfer from other districts are not overlooked but utilized even though they do not immediately join the Presbytery. Elders in good standing who relocate may also be assigned to the Assemblies in the District so that their gifts are put to proper use.

ii. Deacons and Deaconesses in good standing on transfer from other districts also are not overlooked but utilized even though the right hand of fellowship has not been extended. They may not join the Presbytery immediately. The minister in Consultation with the local presbytery determines when the right hand of fellowship is extended to a presbyter on transfer.

16. ACCEPTANCE OF MEMBERSHIP FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS

A person is received into membership of the Church from another denomination with similar beliefs and doctrines if he/she produces a baptismal certificate or a satisfactory identity. An interview is done to ensure that the person is a communicant, and is not leaving the other Church for any adverse reason (Divorce, Polygamy, Facing Disciplinary action) and that there are no personal issues which tarnish his/her character as a Christian. He/she is formally accorded full membership status through the extension of the Right Hand of Fellowship. (Galatians 2:9)

17. FULL TIME MINISTERS

a. Ministerial Committees

District, area, and national ministerial committees are set up to screen prospective workers into the ministry.

b. Calling into the Ministry

No person/worker is called into the ministry without the prior recommendation of the Ministerial Committee or the Executive Council and the ratification of the General Council, unless in some exceptional cases.

c. Vetting

Normally, the person recommended by the local church goes through the district, area, and national levels of interview before being called by the International Executive Council and ratified by the General Council. All Ministerial candidates are screened together with their wives for the purpose

of ministerial sanity. However, wives of candidates are interviewed at area and national levels. They undergo thorough medical examination to determine their medical fitness.

d. Age

Persons accepted for ministry are not above 42 years of age. In special cases, persons over and above 42 years who have special abilities are recommended by the National Executive Council and ratified by the General Council.

18. FAREWELL SERVICES FOR MINISTERS.

The Church holds that all presbyteries organize and conduct farewell services in a very modest and simple manner as follows:

- a. A verbal testimony by two (district Pastor) or three (Area Heads) is allowed.
- b. Only one citation is read and presented at a farewell service. Others are presented without being read.
- c. Farewell service for new entrants to full- time ministry is held at local levels.
- d. For district ministers, it is held at the district seat with representation from other assemblies.
- e. For area heads, it is held at the area seat with representation from other districts/ assemblies.
- f. Tithes, grants, and other restricted funds are not used as parting gifts for ministers.
- g. There is no public presentation of gifts at such services. All presentation of gifts is made to the minister or officer and his family at home or any other convenient place on the days preceding the farewell Sunday.

- h. The organization of such is the responsibility of the presbytery concerned.
- i. No profile is included in the brochure.
- j. Stations served and appointments are not included in the brochure.
- k. The Cost of the brochure is borne by the area/ district/ movement/ ministry concerned.
- l. Farewell services are held in the chapel or any other convenient location.
- m. Head Office ministers' farewell service is conducted in the district to which he is attached.
- n. Photographs in Brochure
 - i. Minister and his wife
 - ii. Minister and family
 - iii. Minister and Executive Committee
- o. Duration. Farewell services do not last more than four hours.
- p. Contents of Brochure
 - i. There is no profile.
 - ii. Program.
 - 1. A maximum of three testimonies to be given by:
 - a. Women's representative
 - b. Elder's representative
 - c. Pastor's representative
(area/National heads only)

19. WELCOME SERVICE

- a. Testimony is not given but a short profile is read.
- b. No more than four sponsored officials representing the former Area (in the case of Area Head).

- c. No more than three sponsored officials from the former District (In the case of District Pastor).
- d. Introduction of the minister's Children and Dependants is recommended. This may cause them to be known and helped or defended when the need arises.
- e. The practice of holding welcome services in the chapel or any convenient place is upheld and maintained.
- f. Adequate preparations should be made at the mission house to receive the incoming pastor and family.

20. OTHER REGULATION CONCERNING MINISTERS

- a. Ministers' Day of Rest. All ministers of the Church observe Monday as ministers' day of rest.
- b. Annual Leave. All ministers including Coordinators enjoy 30 calendar days whilst all area heads enjoy 40.
- c. Areas prepare leave roster for ministers and copies are sent to the National Head. There is no accumulation of annual leave. Leave allowances are paid to every minister.
- d. Presentations to Ministers. Local assemblies/ Movements visit the mission house as arranged by the District Executive. Individual members are also encouraged to visit the mission House.
- e. Ministers' Traveling Expenses. A minister traveling outside his duty station for an official assignment is given an accountable imprest to cover traveling expenses.
- f. Ministers' Appreciation Day. One Sunday in October is set aside as ministers' appreciation day

to be organized by the District Executive and observed at the local levels.

- g. Special Offering for Ministers. Since offering taken in the presence of the beneficiary create an embarrassing situation, such a practice not acceptable for cop ministers.
- h. Ministerial Outfit. Ministers are encouraged to put on Clerical collars at official functions such as weddings, funerals, dedication of buildings, inaugurations etc.
- i. Inheritance Policy for Ministers. Ministers of the Church do not inherit maternally, since the Church upholds paternal inheritance, in line with scripture.
- j. Handing Over. The outgoing minister/officer prepares comprehensive hand over notes given to the incoming minister/ officer. The notes are to be signed by both parties.
- k. Appreciation week is observed for the outgoing minister and family.
- l. During the retirement service, special offering is taken for the retirement minister and family. Individuals are at liberty to present their gifts directly to the retiring minister during the appreciation week or thereafter.
 - i. All areas contribute towards the retirement of a minister as arranged by the Executive Council from time to time. In other words, retirement services are treated as a national level program. It is expedient that preparations for retirement start early enough in order to avoid unexpected

financial burdens on assemblies, districts and movements.

- ii. When a District Pastor is going on retirement, the area head supervises the planning of the retirement program.
- iii. The Area Executive Committee is responsible for planning the retirement program for the Area Head under the direct supervision of the National Head or his appointee.
- iv. Whenever there is a retirement service within an area, ministers in that area do not organize any program to coincide with the retirement day.
- v. Brochures
 1. Adequate numbers of brochures are printed.
 2. Contents (Area Head)
 3. Profile
 4. Order of Service
 5. A maximum of four testimonies to be given by:
 - a. Area Deacon
 - b. Women's representative
 - c. Pastors' representative
 - d. National Executive Council
 6. District Pastor
 - a. Elders' representative
 - b. Woman's representative
 - c. Pastors' representative
 - d. National Executive Council
 7. Photographs
 - a. Elders' representative

- b. Woman's representative
 - c. Pastors' representative
 - d. National Executive Council
8. Attendance. It is proper that during a retirement service, the districts in the metropolitan/urban areas attend in full. Those in other districts are appreciably represented.
9. Citation. One citation is read and presented
10. Duration. Retirement services do not usually last for more than four hours.

21. BREAKING OF BREAD OR LORD'S SUPPER.

In order for it to be held in a solemn atmosphere, there is no clapping and dancing until after the communion. It is a commemorative occasion.

- a. Leftover bread (emblem) is disposed of decently.
- b. Hand shaking after communion is optional.
- c. Giving of the right-hand of fellowship takes place before the celebration.
- d. Members take the emblems (bread) personally.
- e. Members partaking of the communion come to the table instead of it being sent to them in their seats, except where this is not possible.
- f. The Lord's Supper sacrament is celebrated on the first Sunday of each month. However, it is also celebrated on a convenient day and time fixed by the minister.

22. CHURCH FINANCE

- a. *Fund-Raising*

This is done voluntarily after some education. Pastors and Officers do not employ any unorthodox methods to exact money from members during the offering. For example, there is nothing like blessing of envelopes, or asking members to pay large sums of money for special prayers to be said for them. Funds therefore are raised strictly by freewill offering.

b. Offering at Church Services

Apart from freewill Offerings, the number of offerings on any given Sunday service may not exceed two.

c. Loans for Projects

Loans obtained from individual members to finance projects are not allowed since Assemblies could be indebted to some of their own members and thereby cause dissatisfaction within the rank and file of their congregations. Donations are accepted from members only if they give them out of their own volition.

d. Deductions at Source

Deduction made after offerings before the balance is recorded in the accounting books is not encouraged. Rather, the total offering is entered in the books before the required deductions are made. This shows the proper state of the accounts.

e. Misappropriation/ Embezzlement of Funds

Whenever an Officer misappropriates or embezzles church funds, the Area Deacon and the

FAM (where applicable) report the matter to the Area Head for investigation and appropriate action. In the case of a minister, a report is submitted to the Area/National head of the Church for action. In the case of the Area Deacon, the Area Executive Committee takes the necessary action.

f. Financial Returns

It is an offence to hold money intended for the appropriate offices for more than one month, be it tithes, missionary offering, Mckeown's or Pension week proceeds, Convention proceeds, internal/international missions, etc.

g. Release and use of Development funds

The release of development funds (LDF, DDF and RDF) is done in accordance with the provision in the church's financial manual. They are used for the development projects as determined by the appropriate authorities.

h. Purchase of Vehicles by District Pastors/Overseers

All District Ministers consult their respective Area Heads for the requisite approval before purchasing district vehicles. Arbitrary replacement of cars is discouraged. Area Heads also ensure that strong, durable vehicles are procured.

i. Transport Expenses for Widows of Departed Ministers

The traveling expenses and allowances (to and from Conventions and rallies) of all widows of

departed Ministers may be paid by the host of such programs.

23. MARRIAGE

a. Marriage Committee

The church encourages the establishment of marriage committees in all local assemblies to screen and offer advice to prospective couples. Ministers take the prospective couples through biblical counseling after the screening process of the marriage committee.

b. HIV/AIDS test and Marriage

No policy in The Church of Pentecost compels prospective couples to undergo HIV/AIDS test as a necessary condition for recognition, acceptance and blessing of Marriage. Ministers, Presiding Elders, Marriage Committees only advise the would-be couple to undergo the HIV/AIDS test in their own interest since compelling the prospective couple to do the test is an infringement of their rights.

c. Weddings

All weddings in the Church are made as simple as possible. Donations, gifts, and offerings collected at wedding ceremonies are handed over to the couple. Wedding ceremonies being held on Sunday mornings are discouraged.

d. Vows.

- i. Banns of Marriage are raised

- ii. Old and new marriages in the Church are registered at Law Court/The Metropolitan/City Council.
 - iii. Vows Pronounced by both Bride and Groom.
- e. *Veils.* Those to wear the veil include:
- i. First time marriage couples.
 - ii. Widows.
- NB: Veil is to be removed immediately after the father gives the bride to the Groom and before the vows.
- f. *Rings:* Two rings are exchanged
- g. *Marriage Certificates*
Ordinance Certificates are signed by two representatives each of both the Bride and Bridegroom. Church Certificates are signed by one representative each of both Bride and Bridegroom and two representatives from the Church.
- h. *Blessing of Marriages*
Existing marriages are ordained at Court and blessed later at the Mission House or at Church buildings registered for such occasions. No veil is used for existing marriages. Mass blessings of existing marriages are encouraged.
- i. *Status of the Polygamist/ Second Wife*
They are excluded from being given the right-hand of fellowship, giving testimonies, or becoming officers of the Church.

j. Family Planning for the Married Couple

The Church accepts the service of a qualified medical Practitioner in this area. However, the Church opposes any method that promotes immorality and termination of life.

24. DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE

a. DIVORCE

The church does not encourage divorce of marriage. Except for scripturally based reasons (e.g. Adultery Matt. 5:31-32), appropriate disciplinary action could be taken against a member who divorces a partner for any other reason. However, in a situation where a circular court recommends that a partner's life is at risk the church may accept a separation until such time that the two parties are reconciled to each other. No disciplinary action is taken against the victim (The partner whose life may be at risk).

b. REMARRIAGE

People who are converted to Christianity as divorcees and then join the church may be permitted to remarry subject to procedures set up by the local marriage committees.

In the event where a member divorces a partner in a manner that attracts disciplinary action, the church does not consent to the offending party remarrying. No disciplinary action is taken against such a member if his/ her remarriage met the requirements of his or her ethnic customary marriage laws. The innocent party may remarry if

he/ she so desires and the church recognizes such marriages but church wedding services are not permitted.

Divorcees facing disciplinary action and who remarry may have disciplinary actions revoked in due course on the recommendation of the local presbytery. They shall then be reinstated to full membership.

25. RETIREMENT OF OFFICERS

Ordained Elders, Deacons and Deaconesses are retired from active service on attaining a chronological age of Sixty-five, or for reason of ill-health. The decision to retire an officer shall be the prerogative of the District Pastor and his Executive Committee. Retirement Services is conducted as follows

- a. Officers - The Local Assembly is responsible. However if the Elder/Deacon or Deaconess held or holds a District , Area, Region or National office position, the appropriate office supports the Local assembly in giving such an officer a befitting retirement package.
- b. Presentation of gifts where appropriate are made in the week or a few days preceding the date of retirement service. On the day of retirement, a gifts/ donation table is set up at a suitable place in the chapel for collection of gifts for the retiring officer.
- c. On the day of the retirement service, the congregation is encouraged to give free-will offering in appreciation of the officer's service to the church.

26. ISSUANCE OF CHURCH CERTIFICATES

All Church Certificates comprising Marriage, Baptismal and Dedication Certificates are duly stamped and signed by the Officiating Minister and entered into a record book with dates. Such Official documents are securely kept.

27. ISSUE OF INDENTITY CARDS

Transferred members and officers are accepted into membership after producing identity cards. All identity cards of the Church issued to members and officers are stamped and signed by the Minister of the Church at the respective District or Area of the holder.

28. CHURCH ADMINITRATIVE SETUP.

The system of governance is Presbyterian, which means a group of Ministers and ordained elders, deacons and deaconesses who meet to take decisions for the smooth running of the Church at each level. The administration is carved up into four levels; the local assembly, the district, Area and the National levels.

- a. Local Assembly. The local is an assembly or congregation and is headed by a Presiding Elder.
- b. District. A district comprises of one or more assemblies headed by a District Overseer or Pastor.
- c. Area. A number of Districts are put together to form an Area and is headed by an Area Head who is an Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, or Pastor with proven abilities.
- d. National Level. The National level is made up of all the churches in the nation (Comprising all the districts in the various regions/areas) and is

headed by a National Head who is an Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, or Pastor with proven abilities.

29. REPORTING.

Half yearly and yearly reports are submitted by ministers, Presiding Elders and leaders of the various movements and committees to their appropriate higher offices.

30. PRAYER CENTERS

- a. Supervision. No Prayer Center is opened without the prior approval of the National Executive Council.
- b. No local or District level prayers being organized are turned into prayer centers.

31. CHURCH PROJECTS.

- a. Technical Experts/advisers. Locals, Districts and Areas are advised to engage the services of Technical personnel to supervise building projects and acquisition of other church related equipment in order to avoid shoddy work and acquisition of inferior equipment which result in early high maintenance cost or waste in the system.
- b. Sod cutting is done to mark the beginning of a project by the Minister.
- c. Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony/dedication.
 - i. Foundation stone laying is performed at any stage of the project by the Area Head.

- ii. Church buildings are dedicated upon their completion and acquisition of certificate of occupancy by Apostles and Prophets or their representatives.
- d. Acquisition and Disposal of Landed Properties. This is the sole mandate of the Church trustees. No landed property of the Church is disposed off without reference to the National office and the trustees of the church as prescribed in the constitution.

32. CHURCH SERVICES

- a. Worship. Musical instruments are played in the singing of songs but laid down during prayer.
- b. Singing groups are encouraged to sing Pentecostal songs rather than merely entertaining non-Pentecostal songs. The number of singing groups is determined by the size of the District or the assembly. Also singing groups are encouraged to lead moral and upright lives. Any uniform used by such singing groups is decent.

33. SEATING ARRANGMENT

Ministers and the elders occupy local platforms, in order to bring some decorum to the church as a body. Movement/Committee Leaders may assume the platform when they have special Weeks/Activities.

34. REGISTRATION OF CHURCHES

All churches are required to be registered with their respective states and maintain good standing status at all times.

35. LAUNCHING OF MUSICAL ALBUMS

Launching of musical albums by individuals at church premises during normal church services is not encouraged for the following reasons:

- a. It disrupts normal church services.
- b. Monies are extorted from members.
- c. Monies go directly to artistes to the detriment of host assembly.

We believe that the adherence to the principle of this document will bring discipline and sanity to our Church corporate life, ministry and administration.

God richly bless you for reading and adhering to the contents of this document.

NOTES