

U.S. CHURCH ADMINISTRATION MANUAL



WORLDWIDE
CHURCH OF GOD

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Worldwide Church of God

U.S. Church Administration Manual

Worldwide Church of God

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION			
Purpose of this manual	1	Love-motivated leadership	16
Reformation and renewal	1	Grace-filled leadership	16
The church defined	1	Spirit-led leadership	17
The work of the church	2	Word-directed leadership	17
Characteristics of a disciple of Jesus	2	Mission and vision-driven leadership	17
Disciplemaking ministry environments	2	Servant leadership	17
Disciplemaking ministry strategy	3	Involved leadership	17
Further development of this manual	4	Shared leadership	18
		Accountable leadership	18
CHAPTER 1:		CHAPTER 5:	
CHURCH ADMINISTRATION		LEADERSHIP OFFICES	
OVERVIEW		Ordering of titled offices	19
Goals of church administration	5	Elders (spiritual oversight leaders)	19
Objectives of church administration	5	Deacons (ministry leaders)	23
Organizational structures for church administration	5	CHAPTER 6:	
Accountability systems	6	LEADERSHIP IN CONGREGATIONS	
CHAPTER 2:		Pastors (general overview)	25
LOCAL CONGREGATIONS		Senior pastors	25
Becoming a WCG congregation	8	Associate and assistant pastors	28
Local church charter	8	Pastoral leadership teams	29
Naming congregations	9	Small group church leaders	29
Building and equipping congregations	9	Pastor interns	29
Expectations of chartered congregations	10	Advisory councils	29
Renewing and restructuring congregations	10	Finance committees and financial officers	31
Small groups and small group churches	11	Youth leaders and youth workers	31
Disbanding congregations	12	CHAPTER 7:	
CHAPTER 3:		LEADERSHIP IN THE DENOMINATION	
CHURCH MEMBERSHIP		International leadership	32
Affiliates and members	13	United States national leadership	32
Privileges extended to affiliates and members	13	CHAPTER 8:	
Privileges extended to members	13	GRIEVANCE, DISCIPLINE AND	
Expectations of affiliates	14	APPEALS PROCESSES	
Expectations of members	14	Essential values	36
Becoming an affiliate	14	Addressing offenses: general process	36
Becoming a member	14	Handling grievances: formal mediation- reconciliation process	37
Transfer of membership	15	Administering church discipline: general principles and cautions	38
Leaving membership	15	Specific processes for arbitration and disciplinary action	38
CHAPTER 4:		Specific processes for appealing church discipline	41
LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES			
Biblical leadership ethos	16		
Christ-centered leadership	16		

INTRODUCTION

In his letter to the followers of Jesus in Corinth, the Apostle Paul calls upon the church to conduct itself “in a fitting and orderly way” (1 Corinthians 14:40), knowing that “God is not a God of disorder but of peace” (14:33). Paul’s concerns are that the church be strengthened (14:26), be built up (14:12), be unified (12:12) and be active in its God-ordained mission using approaches and means that are biblically appropriate and effective within the church’s cultural contexts (9:19-23). Guided by these and similar scriptural principles, the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) in the United States has set in place the church administration structures and policies presented in this manual.

Purpose of this manual

The primary purpose of this manual is to equip church leaders for teaching and implementing the WCG-USA system of church administration. This system involves governance relationships within congregations and between congregations and the superintending leadership offices of the denomination. The primary users of this manual are pastors, elders, ministry leaders, district superintendents and other leaders and administrators in WCG-USA congregations and denominational offices.

The manual also serves to inform the general membership of the WCG-USA concerning the governance of their congregation and denomination. Open communication is an important objective of church administration and this manual is a principal tool for pursuing that objective.

Reformation and renewal

This manual is the outgrowth of a journey of reformation and renewal that began within the WCG in the late 1980s. That journey continues to be expressed in growth and change in many areas including the church’s understanding of its mission and the administration of the church in support of that mission.

The WCG understands from Scripture that church administration is to involve Spirit-led, diligent leaders who support and oversee the use of interdependent spiritual gifts imparted by the Holy Spirit to the church (1 Peter 4:10-11; Romans 12:6-8). As with all such gifts, those of leadership and administration are to be used in clear-minded, love-filled and self-controlled ways (1 Peter 4:7-8), “so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ” (4:11) as the church “builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” (Ephesians 4:16).

As the WCG’s understanding and experience of the Holy Spirit’s spiritual gifts have changed, its understanding of church administration has changed as well. If the reformation and renewal the Spirit has granted the WCG may be understood as “new wine,” then the church’s new administrative structures and policies may be viewed as new “wine skins” designed to give appropriate form and focus to the Spirit’s gracious gifts (Luke 5:33-39).

The new forms of WCG-USA church administration presented in this manual are, therefore, the church’s grateful and reasoned response to what the Holy Spirit, in his grace, has granted to the church. The prayerful intent of the church in the design of these structures and policies has been and continues to be to walk in step with the Spirit to faithfully and appropriately administer what the Spirit provides. The church approaches this ongoing task with a spirit of reverence and humility, acknowledging its inherent limitations and imperfections, and seeking to remain open to the Spirit’s reforming and refining work.

The church defined

The design of the WCG-USA system of church administration rests upon a biblical understanding of the nature of the church itself. In the English New Testament, the word church translates the Greek word *ekklesia*. In first-century secular Greek, an *ekklesia* was a called-together assembly of persons constituted by well-defined membership. New Testament authors used this common word to refer to the assembly of the people of God—those called together to be disciples (students or followers) of the Lord Jesus Christ. This assembly is referred to in the New Testament in two general contexts: the universal church and the corporate church.

The universal church encompasses all disciples of Jesus Christ in all places and through all times. It is a spiritual organism that is not limited to a single organizational structure or identifying name. The universal church is made up of all believers, defined as those who, through repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Such believers are those who are saved and belong to God because they have received the benefit of Christ’s shed blood (Romans 5:9) and resurrection life (verse 10). They are, by adoption, God’s children (Romans 8:14-16, see NIV footnote on verse 15), having become members of God’s family (Ephesians 3:15).

The corporate church is a visible manifestation of the universal church on earth. Though there is but

one universal church, there are many corporate churches, as Paul implies in his epistles where, for example, he refers to “all the churches of Christ” (Romans 16:16) and “the churches in Galatia” (Galatians 1:2).

The corporate church is appropriately defined by physical, organizational structures that involve a variety of local congregations (assemblies) and multi-church, regional groupings (affiliations). Participants in the corporate church include believers who are members of the spiritually defined universal church as well as those who have not yet come into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

This manual specifically addresses the administration of the local congregations of the WCG in the United States together with the denominational leadership structures that support and superintend those congregations.

The work of the church

Essential to an understanding of the nature of the church is an understanding of the work (mission) of the church. Scripture likens the church to a building belonging to and indwelt by God (Ephesians 2:22; 1 Corinthians 3:9, 17). The builder, foundation and cornerstone of this building is the Lord Jesus Christ as attested to by the apostles and prophets who are part of the church’s essential foundation (Matthew 16:18, 1 Corinthians 3:11, Ephesians 2:20). The building takes full shape as believers, called “living stones,” are placed together by God on this one, enduring foundation (1 Peter 2:5).

The principal work of this building, the church, is to bring glory to the name of Jesus Christ by taking part in his kingdom-building mission “to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10), bringing healing to a world sick with sin and cut off from God (Luke 4:18-19, 2 Corinthians 5:11-21). Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, invites, equips and commissions his followers to participate with him in this mission as harvest-workers (Luke 10:2-3), “fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19) and his “ambassadors” (2 Corinthians 5:20)—those called to live and share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The nature of the participation of Jesus’ followers with him in this mission is brought into focus by one of the Lord’s final commands before his ascension to the Father. On a mountain in Galilee, Jesus gave his followers what has come to be called the great commission with its central command to “make disciples” (Matthew 28:19).

This command is further defined by Jesus’ instructions to “go” (to all peoples), to “baptize” (in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit) and to “teach” (all that Jesus com-

mands). This commission to make disciples is to be the focus of the church’s work until Jesus returns in glory as implied by the Lord’s promise to be with his followers “to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).

The WCG is committed to participate actively with Jesus Christ in his disciplemaking work through his body, the church, in fulfillment of his great commission.

Characteristics of a disciple of Jesus

To actively help people become and then mature as disciples of Jesus, the church must be guided by a clear and biblically informed understanding of the personal characteristics of a disciple. Scripture teaches that disciples are those who have entered a personal and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ where, through the indwelling and empowering Holy Spirit, they share in Jesus’ life and love, becoming increasingly like their teacher and master (Luke 6:40).

The personal characteristics of Christ-likeness in a disciple of Jesus are summarized in the following list.

Characteristics of Jesus’ disciples

Sharing in the life and love of God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, disciples of Jesus become increasingly:

- **Grace-based:** disciples of Jesus relate to God on the basis of his love, acceptance and provision in Christ.
- **Christ-centered:** disciples of Jesus worship God by trusting, loving and living in allegiance to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
- **Spirit-formed:** disciples of Jesus follow the lead of the Holy Spirit, participating with him through the spiritual disciplines as he conforms them to the image of Christ.
- **Word-directed:** disciples of Jesus order their lives in the gospel, embracing and stewarding God’s gifts of grace through faith that expresses itself in love.
- **Fellowship-building:** disciples of Jesus participate in the grace-filled fellowship of a local church, leading to a community of purpose, hope and expectancy.
- **Disciple-making:** disciples of Jesus extend God’s grace by pursuing Jesus’ mission out of the fullness of Jesus’ heart.

Disciplemaking ministry environments

The church facilitates the emergence of these personal characteristics of a disciple by providing ministry environments grounded in the life-enhancing foundations summarized in the following list.

Foundations of discipling ministry environments

Ministry environments are conducive to the development of disciples of Jesus when they are characterized by:

- **An atmosphere of love:** where people are embraced by God's love and are encouraged to relate to God on the basis of his grace in Christ.
- **The adoration of Christ:** where Jesus is seen and exalted for who he is and his disciples experience the joy of who they are in Christ.
- **Prayerful dependence:** where dependence on God and his transforming grace is modeled and embraced through the spiritual disciplines.
- **Communication of the Word:** where the gospel is clearly proclaimed, leading the lost to receive Christ and enabling disciples to live and share the gospel of Christ.
- **A biblical church image:** where disciples experience and contribute to the growth of the church as a community of grace characterized by purpose, hope and expectancy.
- **Commitment to contact:** where disciples are equipped for a discipling ministry in accord with their spiritual gifts with a strong emphasis on building grace-based relationships both with believers and lost people.

Discipling ministry strategy

In and through these ministry environments, the church pursues a discipling strategy based on Jesus' commands and priorities and the ministry of the apostles applied within twenty-first century contexts. This strategy involves four essential ministry patterns: building believers, equipping workers, winning the lost, and multiplying/sending shepherd-leaders.

1) Building believers

Expanding his command to "make disciples," Jesus spoke of "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). A new believer is baptized as a sign of faith in Christ and entrance into his community, the church. Baptism illustrates both saving faith and the growth that occurs as a new believer is built up in Christ through the Holy Spirit.

The WCG seeks to participate with the Spirit in building believers through Christ-centered worship, use of the Word, fellowship and prayer:

- **Worship.** Believers grow in worship settings that exalt who God is, what he has done for us, and who we are in Christ. Christ-centered, Spirit-led corporate worship is a primary tool

for building believers (Ephesians 5:18-20).

- **Word.** Believers grow as they seek God's guidance in their lives through his living Word, Jesus Christ. During his ministry on earth, Jesus provided this direction through his personal, guiding presence. Today, Jesus guides the church through the Holy Spirit who nurtures Jesus' disciples through God's Word in the Holy Scriptures, through his personal guidance in accordance with Scripture, and through relationships with Word-directed believers in the church.
- **Fellowship.** Believers are baptized into a family of faith where the aloneness that sin has produced is replaced by the oneness that Jesus offers in his community, the church. In the church, believers grow as they get to know one another and carry one another's burdens. In doing so, they fulfill the law of Christ, which is love (Galatians 6:2).
- **Prayer.** Believers commune with God in prayer, placing their needs and concerns before him and giving him praise and thanks in all things. In prayer, believers both communicate with God and listen to God, relating to him in a personal and intimate way, rehearsing their trust in him and giving him all their burdens and all their worship.

2) Equipping workers

Jesus spoke of teaching disciples "to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20). As believers grow in their love for Jesus and for his church, they need to be equipped to minister to believers and non-believers in Jesus' name (Ephesians 4:10-12). This equipping includes training and coaching that encourages faithful participation in Jesus' discipling ministry in and through the church.

3) Winning the lost

Jesus' instruction to "go" (Matthew 28:19) implies that the church is to reach out to unbelievers—sharing God's love and the gospel with those Jesus refers to as the "lost" (Luke 19:10; 15:1-32). The WCG equips its members for this work of sharing the gospel by teaching the following three-part strategy for relational evangelism:

- **Cultivating.** Building genuine friendships with unbelievers in ways that develop loving, authentic, relational bridges without compromising obedience to Christ.
- **Planting.** Sharing with those friends, through actions and words, with wisdom, the positive difference a relationship with Jesus makes in a person's life.

- **Reaping.** Sharing with those friends a clear presentation of the gospel.

4) Multiplying/sending shepherd-leaders

Jesus devoted much of his earthly ministry to choosing, training and commissioning leaders—the twelve apostles in particular. Following Jesus’ resurrection, these leaders, led by the Holy Spirit, identified, coached, appointed and sent additional leaders. As a result, the church grew in unity, maturity and in numbers.

The Spirit continues to gift some believers within the church to be shepherd-leaders of God’s “flock.” Existing leaders have the responsibility to identify, equip, deploy and coach these emerging leaders.

Further development of this manual

The systems of church administration presented in this manual are designed to equip and enable the church to pursue this disciplemaking ministry strategy within Christ-centered ministry environments. The structures and policies presented here exist to serve Christ by advancing his mission in and through his church.

Because the church continues to grow in its understanding of this mission, and because the world to which the church is sent continues to change, this manual is not considered a finished or closed document. As revisions and corrections are made, it will be updated as appropriate.

CHAPTER 1

CHURCH ADMINISTRATION OVERVIEW

Goals of church administration

The structures and policies presented in this manual proceed from a biblical understanding of the church and its mission as summarized in the introduction. This understanding is applied through the pursuit of the following operational goals for church administration within the WCG-USA.

1) Be obedient to Jesus' great commission and great commandment.

Church leaders, church administration structures and policies exist to bring honor to the name of Jesus Christ by advancing his work in and through the church. The church defines this work as obedience to Jesus' great commission to participate with him in making disciples (Matthew 28:16-20), motivated by obedience to Jesus' great commandment to share in his love for God and for people (1 John 3:11-24; 4:7-21).

2) Be faithful stewards and servant leaders.

Church leaders are stewards of the gospel (1 Corinthians 4:1), and of the people they lead. In these stewardship responsibilities, they are to be devoted and zealous, but never in ways that are abusive or paternalistic. Church leaders are to be servant-leaders (Mark 10:42-45) who have a strong sense of mission that is motivated by a heart of love.

3) Provide healthy ministry environments.

Church leaders advance Jesus' disciplemaking mission by leading the church in providing healthy ministry environments that contribute positively to the development of devoted disciples of Jesus. Within these life-imparting spiritual environments, lost people find Jesus, believers grow in Jesus, growing believers become active workers with Jesus, and appropriately gifted workers become leaders with Jesus, appointed to direct disciplemaking ministries in and through the church.

Objectives of church administration

In pursuit of these operational goals, church administration structures and policies are focused on achieving the following specific objectives:

- Conform to the scriptural examples and principles relevant to structuring the church under the new covenant of grace.
- Model and teach an ethos of openness, humility, service and accountability at all levels of leadership.

- Balance accountability and empowerment by providing clear lines and limits of accountability administered in ways that invite and respond to the creative work of the Spirit.
- Protect the denomination, its congregations and its members from spiritual harm.
- Maintain appropriate unity of doctrine and practice in congregations dispersed throughout the world in many different cultures.
- Allow the denomination and member congregations to adapt quickly and responsibly to changing circumstances in order to advance the church's disciplemaking work in a rapidly changing world.
- Respond to the ways the Holy Spirit has already used leadership in reforming and renewing the church while allowing for and facilitating continuing transformation.

Organizational structures for church administration

Rather than mandating specific organizational structures and governance systems for the church, the Bible provides relevant principles and illustrative examples. Essential among these is the principle that the church is to function as the "body of Christ" with individual members interdependently connected through the Holy Spirit in common union with Christ, who is the head of the body.

The Holy Spirit gifts each member for service (1 Corinthians 12:1-11; Romans 12:4-6; Ephesians 4:7). The leadership of the church has the responsibility to value, identify, equip and mobilize the gifts the Spirit imparts to advance the collective work of the church (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Each member is essential to the church and no member can repudiate another as unimportant. Furthermore, none can say, "I don't belong" (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 4:15-16).

In implementing these biblical principles, the WCG utilizes three primary church administration structures: local congregations, denominational support/oversight, and leadership offices.

1) Local congregations

The New Testament presents the local assembly of believers (referred to in Scripture as a congregation or a church) as the principal structure for the church in its disciplemaking mission. In congregations, the people of God worship the Father, in Christ, through the Holy Spirit. Members offer nurturing care and sup-

port to one another and work together to share the gospel with unbelievers.

In local congregations, believers and seekers alike give and receive love and are instructed in the Holy Scriptures. In a local congregation they are trained in the ways of God and given opportunities for spiritual, emotional and physical growth.

2) Denominational support/oversight

In today's cultures, multi-congregation groups are generally referred to as church denominations. The word denomination comes from the related word denominate, which means, simply, to name. Congregations affiliating together in a denomination live and work together under a common name, supported by a common leadership structure. That structure exists to mobilize, equip, support, protect, oversee and serve the congregations that associate together under the common name as they work together to advance the cause of Christ on earth.

By joining and working together in a denomination, member congregations receive and share mission-enhancing strengths and benefits including the following:

- They share in a common heritage, administer common church administration systems and embrace common beliefs and practices.
- They share family-like affiliations throughout the world that preserve and enhance appropriate diversity within the body of Christ while acknowledging and honoring the essential unity of all believers.
- They share in a mix of natural and spiritual gifts that position member congregations to reach out to specific segments of society.
- They share the strength and safety that comes from pooled resources and mutual accountability extending beyond what one congregation can provide on its own. Such accountability involves matters of doctrine, ethics, policy and strategy.

The WCG values the benefits of the family-like denominational ties among its congregations and individual members. Those ties are established, supported and superintended through various denominational support and oversight offices that are described in this manual.

3) Leadership offices

The New Testament teaches that leadership is essential to the health of the church. Leaders are appointed and are to be acknowledged and respected (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13). In the early church, leadership offices included apostles, evangelists and prophets who often traveled in the service of multiple congregations. Other leaders who served individual congregations were called (in translation) overseers (bishops), elders,

pastor-teachers and deacons. Some individuals seemed to have had multiple roles and titles.

There is only limited biblical guidance concerning how these leadership offices were structured and how individual leaders were selected and supervised in the early church. In Acts 6:1-6, the apostles called upon the believers to identify seven leaders who were then appointed (perhaps as deacons) by the apostles. Paul (with Barnabas) appointed elders (Acts 14:23), implied that Timothy would choose overseers (1 Timothy 3:1-7), and authorized Titus to appoint elders (Titus 1:5).

From these and similar scriptural examples, the WCG concludes that various leaders with various titles (including those of elder and deacon) were recognized, appointed, equipped and supervised by a recognized leadership structure that often seemed to extend beyond the local congregation. The WCG follows these biblical examples and principles in structuring leadership offices that serve its member congregations and the denomination at large.

Details concerning the structuring of these offices are provided in chapters five through seven of this manual.

Accountability systems

Biblically appropriate, accountable relationships within and between the three organizational structures of the church are essential to the church's health. Such accountability begins with each Christian's personal accountability to their Lord Jesus Christ. That accountability is expressed in accountable relationships at multiple levels: between individual members, between leaders and members, between leaders at various levels and between local congregations and the denomination.

The imperative of accountability gives rise to the need for systems to appropriately administer that accountability. The Bible does not mandate a particular system. Rather, a variety of governance systems are in evidence and even greater variety has emerged during the history of the church.

In some of these historical governance systems, leaders in congregations are accountable to their senior pastor, and the senior pastor is accountable to denominational supervisors. This system is often referred to as episcopal governance.

In other systems, leaders (including the pastor) are accountable to a group of elders (or other governing leaders) within the congregation. This system is often referred to as presbyterian governance.

In still other systems, leaders are accountable to the membership through the utilization of member voting or similar means of representation. This system is often referred to as congregational governance.

The WCG system of church governance has

characteristics of all three historical models, particularly those of episcopal and presbyterian governance. In the WCG system, church leaders are appointed by and directly accountable to their immediate ecclesiastical supervisors. For example, senior pastors are appointed by the denomination and are supervised by the superintendent of U.S. ministers through the Church Administration (CAD) office and the district superintendent (DS) (refer to chapter six). As another example, ministry leaders serving within a congregation are appointed by and then supervised by the senior pastor of that congregation (refer to chapter five).

This accountability to a leader's ecclesiastical su-

ervisor is broadened and balanced in the WCG by structures and policies that establish, facilitate and thereby encourage meaningful input to leaders from those being led. For example, the advisory council of a congregation provides ongoing advice, perspective and counsel to the pastor in his leadership decisions within the congregation (refer to chapter six).

To deal with breaches of duty and conflict that sometimes arise in these accountability relationships, the WCG system of church administration provides standards and procedures for the filing of grievances, the administration of church discipline, and the hearing of appeals concerning that discipline (refer to chapter eight).

CHAPTER 2

LOCAL CONGREGATIONS

The Worldwide Church of God is an international network of congregations and denominational offices working together to advance the biblical mission of living and sharing the gospel. Though international in scope, the mission of the church is essentially local in focus. For that reason, the WCG emphasizes planting, building, equipping, supervising and other means for supporting and superintending its local congregations.

WCG congregations derive many benefits from participation in the denomination, including the following:

- National and regional publications, special worship events, training conferences and classes and various other forms of training and education through which the WCG enriches and equips the leaders and members of its congregations.
- Central administrative support services provided through denominational offices including liability insurance, employee benefits administration, payroll processing, ministerial supplies, legal services and computer support.
- Localized support and supervision provided, primarily, through the denomination's district superintendents. These services include group and personalized training and coaching for pastors, other elders, small group church leaders, ministry leaders, advisory councils and finance committees.

In addition to these and other benefits available to WCG congregations, the members and affiliates within those congregations derive the many related benefits enumerated in chapter three.

Becoming a WCG congregation

Congregations are added to the WCG family through the planting of new congregations and when non-WCG congregations join the denomination. New church plants are generally initiated through a cooperative effort involving an existing WCG congregation and a denominational office (usually through a DS). When a church is planted in this way, the sponsoring denominational office coaches and supports the leaders of the "mother" (planting) congregation as well as the leaders of the "daughter" (plant) congregation, as the planting process unfolds.

Newly planted congregations often start by utilizing a small group configuration (refer to the section on **small group churches** later in this chapter). Such newly planted congregations are sponsored either by a "mother" congregation (and are supervised by and

accountable to that congregation's senior pastor or his designee), or are sponsored by and directly supervised by the denomination (usually through the DS).

Non-WCG congregations wishing to join the denomination are encouraged to contact the CAD office or a DS where each request will be handled on a case-by-case basis. In general, those congregations that embrace the WCG's core teachings (enumerated in the Statement of Beliefs), the denomination's vision (mission and strategy) and its administrative policies (set forth in this manual and in the WCG-USA Financial Manual), will be welcomed into the WCG family. Acceptance of a non-WCG congregation into the denomination is acknowledged through the credentialing (as appropriate) of that congregation's elders, and granting to that congregation a local church charter.

Local church charter

Local churches are officially established as full-service congregations of the WCG through the granting of a charter in which the denomination sets forth the nature of the relationship between the denomination and its congregations. The church charter has the following purposes:

- To confer the status of "chartered congregation" to those congregations so designated.
- To outline the privileges and expectations of chartered congregations.
- To advocate, define and proclaim the relationship that unites members, congregations and the denomination into one cooperative body, dedicated to Christ and to his mission on earth.
- To comply with relevant government/tax laws.

Following is the text of the charter for local congregations of the WCG-USA.

BE IT KNOWN TO ALL BY THESE PRESENTS: That, pursuant to an act of the Worldwide Church of God, a California nonprofit, religious corporation (hereinafter the "Parent Church"), with the consent and approval of the Advisory Council of Elders, said Parent Church hereby issues this Charter to the above-named local church congregation (hereinafter the "Local Congregation").

BE IT FURTHER KNOWN: That, by issuance of this Charter the aforementioned Local Congregation is hereby solemnly declared, pronounced, and proclaimed a duly Chartered and authorized subordinate entity of the Parent Church. Said Local Congregation is entitled to all the benefits, privi-

leges, and honors thereunto appertaining, and is likewise subject to those responsibilities incumbent upon such a Local Congregation, including, but not limited to, adherence to the various proclamations, directives, and doctrinal tenets of the Parent Church.

MOREOVER: Since the Bible, the Word of God, clearly and unequivocally pronounces unity one of the chief essential characteristics of the Church of God, this Charter evidences, and declares, that said unity does and of a right ought to exist by, between, and among, the Local Congregation, the Parent Church, and all other duly Chartered local congregations of the Parent Church wherever and whenever they may be found.

THEREFORE: Based upon these fundamental truths, the Local Congregation is hereby authorized and directed to perform the spiritual duties pursuant to such a status including: to perform sacerdotal functions, conduct worship services, engage in local evangelism, aid those in need through ministries in accordance with its mission, and to otherwise proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, all in the name of the Parent Church.

The purposes of this Local Congregation are religious. No substantial part of the activities of this Local Congregation shall consist of carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and it shall not participate in or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

All assets of the Local Congregation are irrevocably dedicated to religious purposes. This Local Congregation is a nonprofit entity, and its assets may not, either while said Local Congregation is in existence or if and when it is ever dissolved, inure to the benefit of any private individual.

By issuing this Charter, the Parent Church has exercised its spiritual authority and discretion under its internal Ecclesiastical Church law, and has taken this action confidently, proudly, and in the good faith belief that this Local Congregation will continue uprightly and in unity with the Parent Church and all of its local congregations.

However, if for any reason the Parent Church revokes this Charter, said Charter immediately becomes null and void, the status it confers is thereby lost, the privileges arising under it cease, and the Local Congregation shall forthwith surrender the same.

Naming congregations

When the denomination charts a congregation, it

assigns to that congregation (in consultation with the pastor) a generic name that combines the name of the denomination with the location where the congregation meets for worship (as in "Peoria Worldwide Church of God"). This generic name may be abbreviated as needed to meet space requirements on signs, legal documents, checks, etc.

At its discretion and initiative, a congregation may select and use a more descriptive local name for the congregation so long as that selection and its use conform to the following stipulations:

- 1) The local name should not be one already in use by another church in the general area.
- 2) The local name should not carry negative or misleading connotations in the minds of existing or potential members.
- 3) The local name is to be checked with appropriate governmental agencies to confirm that it is not already registered or trademarked.
- 4) The local name is to be submitted to the DS for review before the selection is finalized.
- 5) Once a congregation changes its name, the new name is to be submitted to the CAD office and DS so that the denomination can update its records and notify the IRS of the change.
- 6) Local names are to include the tag line: "a congregation of the Worldwide Church of God" (as in, "New Hope Church, a congregation of the Worldwide Church of God"). Though this tag line need not appear in all uses, it is to be included when the name appears on legal and financial documents (such as contracts, receipts, checks, etc.). To meet space limitations, the tag line may be abbreviated (as in "a WCG congregation").

Building and equipping congregations

A primary objective of the denomination is the building and equipping of its congregations for full participation in Jesus' discipling ministry patterns. This support is offered through a variety of denominational services including publications, regional worship festivals, equipping conferences and district-based group and personalized training and coaching provided through DS's and others.

DS's are active in building and equipping congregations by providing pastors with on-going personal support, consultation and supervision. DS's also provide pastors and other congregational leaders with group training and coaching through seminars, classes and leadership meetings. In addition, DS's occasionally visit congregations to provide encouragement, preaching, training, and other means for supporting leaders and members.

DS's also offer church development consultations

to provide congregational leaders with focused coaching concerning the congregation's ongoing development. Areas that may be addressed in these consultations include spiritual formation, strategic planning, financial management, leadership development, church health and related issues.

During the consultation, the DS may meet with the pastor, advisory council, other leaders and members as determined with the pastor's input. In conducting the consultation, the DS may use surveys and other diagnostic tools and will review vision documents, financial reports and other relevant materials. The goal is to accurately diagnose the situation so that the DS can effectively coach the congregation in its development.

Following the church development consultation, the DS will prepare a report of findings and recommendations. The report will be sent to the pastor who will share the report with the advisory council and, at the pastor's discretion, with other leaders and the general membership.

The DS will follow up with the pastor and other leaders to monitor progress in implementing the recommendations of the consultation report. The DS may offer training classes and materials to assist congregations in the implementation process.

Expectations of chartered congregations

The operation of chartered congregations involves leaders and members within those congregations working in partnership with one another and with the denomination. The denomination contributes to this partnership by providing congregations with the resources, oversight and support services outlined in this manual. Congregations contribute to this partnership by meeting the expectations set forth in the church charter, and by providing the following services and resources that are expected of full-service congregations:

- Pastoral leadership provided through either a senior pastor or a pastoral leadership team. This leadership is to function in accordance with the relevant stipulations of this manual, including leading the congregation in providing ministry to members, affiliates, guests and the public as outlined in the expectations of senior pastors.
- Weekly worship services that minister to members and guests. The teaching and announcement portions of these services are to be tape-recorded with master tapes retained for at least one year.
- Financial officers and related financial management services, by which weekly offerings are received, processed, accounted for, and disbursed in conformance with the WCG-USA Financial Manual.

- Income sufficient to meet the costs associated with operating as a full-service congregation including fulfillment of the apportionments paid by local congregations to the denomination as detailed in the Financial Manual.

The financial systems for congregations set forth in the Financial Manual are not yet fully operative—completion of the transition to these new systems will occur following finalization of the sale of the denomination's headquarters property. Currently, financial operations of congregations are defined in the Ministerial Manual and other relevant documents.

If a congregation becomes unable to meet the aforementioned expectations for chartered congregations, the DS will assist the congregation's leadership in evaluating alternatives for renewing and/or restructuring.

Renewing and restructuring congregations

In conducting the disciplinemaking ministries of a full-service local church, congregations face significant and often difficult challenges. The denomination is committed to partnering with its congregations so that together, through God's empowering grace, these challenges are met and the mission of Christ on earth is advanced.

A particular challenge faced by some congregations is an insufficiency of human and/or financial resources that may make it impractical or even impossible to continue operating as a full-service congregation. Though such circumstances can be disheartening, they are not insurmountable. Viable alternatives exist for congregations to not only meet the challenge of insufficient resources, but to thrive as fellowships committed to worshipping and working together to advance Christ's disciplinemaking ministry.

When a congregation is faced with a continuing challenge of insufficient resources, the DS will assist that congregation in designing and implementing a plan for renewal and/or restructuring in order to increase mission effectiveness while reducing costs. Among many viable alternatives for restructuring are the following:

- Rather than meeting for worship in a church building or rented hall, move to a facility with low or no rental or mortgage cost. Such facilities include meeting rooms in senior centers, town halls, nursing homes, etc. Another viable alternative is to meet for worship in the home of a member (full-service congregations that worship in homes are sometimes referred to as house churches).
- Share an employed pastor with an adjacent

WCG congregation (in a church circuit).

- Transition from a pastor employed by the church full time to one employed part time, or to a pastor or pastoral leadership team not employed by the church.
- Merge with an adjacent WCG congregation.
- Transition from a chartered, full-service local church to a congregation that is configured and officially recognized by the denomination as a small group church.

Small groups and small group churches

A small group is an important biblical structure for the assembly of believers and their friends in family-like settings for the worship, fellowship and outreach that are fundamental to Christian community. Small groups in the WCG are of two types:

1. Small groups within full-service congregations. Chartered congregations in addition to their weekly large-group worship services usually offer small groups of this type. These small groups are structured and administered as deemed appropriate by the sponsoring congregation in accordance with the governance principles set forth in this manual (the manual does not mandate the specifics of the structure and administration of this type of small group).

2. Small group churches (SGCs). These small groups are places where believers and friends gather for their primary worship and fellowship, and as a base for outreach. SGCs are officially designated as WCG congregations and are administered as described in this section.

The use and benefits of small group churches

The SGC structure is used most frequently in two circumstances: For newly planted churches until they are ready to operate as full-service congregations, and for existing congregations that are no longer able (or desiring) to function as full-service congregations. In both circumstances, SGC participants are effectively mobilized for meaningful ministry: up to God in worship, in to one another in nurturing care (fellowship), and out to the unchurched (outreach).

Outreach from within a SGC occurs in two primary ways: through the personal outreach of group members who invite unchurched friends and family to participate in the group, and through the SGCs ongoing support of the collective missions of the denomination. Through these and other means, SGCs cultivate, plant and reap growth that may lead to the birth (or re-birth) of such groups into full-service, chartered congregations.

Though not chartered as full-service local churches, SGCs are officially recognized as WCG congregations.

Through the funding provided by the offerings of SGC participants, these groups and their leader(s) receive basic levels of support and oversight services from the denomination, including supervision and resourcing provided by the DS and other denominational leaders and offices. SGCs have many other ministry-enhancing strengths and advantages, including the following:

- SGCs usually meet in homes. This not only minimizes facility costs but also provides an informal and relational meeting environment that is comfortable for members and often preferred by unchurched guests.
- SGCs are effective learning environments where teaching is often interactive using guided discussions on biblical passages or themes. With this teaching format, a small group church need not have the expertise nor expend the considerable time necessary to prepare more traditional sermons, classes, etc.
- SGCs avoid the outlay of money and labor necessary to purchase and operate the complex equipment (such as sound amplification and recording systems) needed to support full-service church worship. Small group churches are not required by the denomination to tape record their worship services.
- SGCs do not need to provide complex financial management systems (refer to financial arrangements for small group churches below).
- SGCs are not required to provide a regular weekly worship service. Though weekly worship services are expected of full-service congregations, an SGC has the flexibility to alter that meeting schedule. Some SGCs meet every week, some every other week, some monthly—the schedule may be changed from time to time in response to seasonal and developmental needs, constraints and opportunities.

Structuring small group churches

In the WCG-USA, SGCs are structured in one of two basic ways:

1. Assigned to a sponsoring full-service, chartered congregation and accountable to that congregation's senior pastor (or his designee).

2. Assigned to the direct supervision of the denomination and directly accountable to the DS.

When an SGC is formed, the DS will assist the group's leadership in finding a sponsoring full-service congregation or in being assigned directly to the denomination. SGCs sponsored by full-service, chartered congregations receive offerings in their worship services and then transfer those donations to the sponsoring congregation where they are counted, banked, accounted for, receipted and disbursed.

At this time, full-service congregations send regular donations received locally (including those transferred from associated SGCs) to the denomination for processing and disbursement. Following the sale of the denomination's headquarters property, local donations will be processed and disbursed locally by the sponsoring congregation. Disbursement will include payment to the denomination of apportionments on that income and payment to any associated SGCs to cover their local expenses (in accordance with the stipulations of the Financial Manual).

When an SGC is assigned directly to the supervision of the denomination, the offerings of individual SGC participants may be sent directly to the denomination, and/or the SGC may receive offerings in the group's worship services, bundle those offerings and send them directly to the denomination where the offerings are processed and disbursed by denominational staff.

At this time, the denomination pays for limited local expenses of SGCs according to the relevant policies set forth in the Ministerial Manual and in other policy directives. Following the sale of the denomination's headquarters property (and in accordance with the stipulations of the WCG-USA Financial Management Manual and the Financial Software Manual) it is anticipated that local donations sent directly to the denomination by SGCs and their individual participants will be disbursed by the denomination as follows:

- One-third of income from regular donations is returned to the appropriate SGC (by wire transfer to the group's local bank account). If an individual SGC does not desire the return of funds in this way, it may ask the denomination to credit all or part of its one third to the denomination's general fund.
- Another one third is credited to the denomination's general fund.
- The last one third is credited to a district fund for development of SGCs and related district-based ministries.

Small group church leaders and members

The primary coordinator/leader within an individual SGC, and the denomination's primary point of contact with the SGC is referred to as the **small group church leader** (refer to chapter six concerning qualifications and expectations for SGC leaders including elders who may be licensed to serve in that responsibility).

Members and affiliates of chartered congregations who become and remain active participants in SGCs maintain their WCG membership privileges. As new individuals become active participants in an SGC, they would appropriately be invited to become WCG members or affiliates in accordance with the processes outlined in this manual. The SGC leader records new members and affiliates using the online records system.

Disbanding congregations

In some limited circumstances, when other alternatives for restructuring are not viable, closing (disbanding) a chartered, full-service local church or a small group church may be appropriate. If a congregation is considering this option (due to limited resources or for other reasons), the congregation and the denomination will proceed together in accordance with the following process:

1. The pastor or other principal leader of the congregation will confer with the DS before discussing disbanding with members of the congregation.

2. If consideration of disbanding proceeds, the DS will arrange a meeting to discuss the matter with the pastor/principal leader, the advisory council and/or other leaders within the congregation.

3. If consideration of disbanding proceeds, the DS will lead a meeting with the congregation in which members are given opportunity to express their concerns, desires and counter-proposals. The pastor will, if practical, give all affiliates and members at least three weeks advance notice of this meeting.

4. Discussion concerning disbanding will include possible transfer of members and affiliates to other WCG congregations and disposition of any property owned by the congregation and/or denomination (such disposition shall be made with the advice of the Legal Department and with the consent of CAD).

CHAPTER 3

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Scripture teaches that when individuals turn to God in repentance, trusting in Jesus as Savior and Lord, they are baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ, becoming members of the body of Christ, the universal church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 4:4-5). It is the belief of the WCG that such membership in the universal church is not defined or limited to a single corporate church organization (denomination or congregation). It is, nevertheless, the conviction of the WCG, based on Scripture, that corporate (localized) bodies of believers are of great importance to the mission of the universal church and to the believers who constitute the body of Christ.

Affiliates and members

Within its local congregations, the WCG seeks to minister to members of the universal body of Christ (believers) as well as non-believers who wish to associate with the church. Believers who participate in the WCG and/or in its local congregations are designated in one of two categories:

Affiliates are believers who through attendance and/or financial support associate themselves with a local congregation of the WCG or with the denomination in general. Affiliate status may be conferred by a congregation or by the denomination with the concurrence of the affiliate. Affiliate status is often a preliminary step toward membership. Affiliates younger than age 16 are designated as **youth affiliates** (age 16 is the age in the United States when many youths begin to take on adult activities and responsibilities).

Members are baptized believers who request and are then accepted into membership having committed to active participation in a local congregation of the WCG as evidenced by consistent attendance, financial support and service to and through the congregation. Member status is normally granted by a WCG congregation and automatically confers membership in the denomination. Members younger than age 16 are designated as **youth members**.

Privileges extended to affiliates and members

The worship services sponsored by the denomination and by its member congregations are open to all believers and non-believers who come in peace (with limited exceptions for those under certain forms of church discipline—see chapter eight). When the

Lord's Supper (communion) is served in such services, all believers (those who profess personal allegiance to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord), regardless of denominational affiliation, age, or baptism status, are welcome to partake. In addition, and as it is able, the WCG offers spiritual counsel and prayer (including anointing with oil for healing) to all who ask.

The following services and privileges, however, are generally extended only to WCG affiliates and members (including youth affiliates and youth members with the exceptions noted):

- Ongoing spiritual care and equipping guided by denominational and congregational leaders. Such care and equipping includes spiritual counsel, educational classes and programs, emergency assistance and the like.
- Regular access to the special services and ceremonies of the church, including the blessing of children, weddings and funerals. These special services are also extended to non-members as resources permit and as deemed appropriate on a case-by-case basis.
- A subscription to The Worldwide Church of God News (WN), the denomination's member publication.
- The right to file grievances and to make appeals as set forth in chapter eight.
- Youth affiliates and youth members (affiliates and members under age 16) have all the aforementioned privileges of affiliates and members excluding the subscription to the WN and the right to file grievances and appeals (note, however, that youth affiliates and youth members have access to grievance and appeals processes through a parent or legal guardian who is a member or affiliate).

Privileges extended to members

The following services and privileges are generally extended only to WCG members (including youth members with the exceptions noted):

- Advanced training for leadership in a congregation or denominational office.
- Designation as a leader in a denominational office or within a congregation, including appointment to the offices of deacon and elder (see the next chapter for other qualifications necessary for various types of leadership).
- The right to nominate others for leadership in the WCG congregation(s) where the individual is active in membership.

- Youth members (members under age 16) have all the aforementioned privileges of members excluding eligibility to be appointed as a deacon or elder.

Expectations of affiliates

WCG affiliates (including youth affiliates) meet the following expectations:

- Acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord that may or may not have been confirmed through water baptism.
- Behavior that reflects general acceptance of *The Statement of Beliefs of the Worldwide Church of God* and that avoids divisive behavior in any areas of disagreement.
- Behavior that reflects general support of the leaders of the denomination and (if applicable) the WCG congregation where they attend.
- Behavior that reflects Christian love toward those who fellowship within the WCG congregation where they attend.
- Agreement to abide by the WCG policies and procedures concerning church discipline as set forth in this manual (refer to chapter eight).

Expectations of members

WCG members (including youth members) meet the following expectations:

- Acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord that has been confirmed through water baptism.
- Active support of the denomination and the WCG congregation where they attend as evidenced by attendance, prayer, service and financial giving (“active” in these measurements is subject to mitigating circumstances in the life of the member—for example, an individual who is home-bound for reasons of ill health may hold membership without being consistent in attendance).
- Behavior that reflects general agreement with *The Statement of Beliefs of the Worldwide Church of God*, avoids divisiveness in any areas of disagreement, and that seeks out pastoral counsel to discuss significant disagreements.
- Behavior that reflects support of the leadership of the denomination and of the WCG congregation in which membership is held.
- Behavior that reflects Christian love toward those who fellowship within the WCG congregation where they attend.
- Behavior that offers a Christ-like witness in the community at large.
- Agreement to abide by the WCG policies and procedures concerning church discipline as set

forth in this manual (refer to chapter eight).

Becoming an affiliate

Affiliates are those who, with their concurrence, are entered on a list of affiliates within the WCG congregation(s) where they attend (or by the denomination when they are not affiliated with a specific WCG chartered congregation). Generally, the pastor of a congregation appoints to affiliate status those who are fairly regular in attendance at worship and/or fairly regular in donating to the congregation. The denomination may also appoint to affiliate status those who are regular donors to the denomination and those who participate in officially designated small group churches.

Granting of affiliate status is not generally announced publicly, though a pastor may choose to do so in certain instances. No official certificate is issued to acknowledge affiliate status. The congregation or denominational office that makes the appointment registers the affiliate’s status using the online member records system.

Minors (those under age 18) may be accepted as affiliates (including youth affiliates) only with the approval of a parent or legal guardian. It is appropriate for the pastor to invite youth affiliates at age 16 into an adult level of affiliation.

Becoming a member

Members are those who request and are then accepted into membership based on the individual’s commitment to the aforementioned expectations. Congregations are encouraged to routinely publicize the process for acceptance into membership, inviting potential candidates to apply by contacting the pastor of the congregation where the applicant will regularly attend.

Applicants for membership should be counseled by the receiving pastor (or someone appointed by the pastor) concerning the privileges and expectations of members as outlined in this manual. This counsel may occur in an individualized counseling session or in a membership class.

One of the requirements for becoming a member is water baptism. It is the biblical pattern that those who have received Jesus Christ profess their faith through water baptism. Baptism pictures both entrance into communion with Christ and into fellowship with other believers in the community of faith (the church). Water baptism is, therefore, appropriately (though not necessarily) performed in the local church where the believer will be a member. If an applicant for membership has not been baptized, he or she may become a member upon such baptism.

In the WCG, baptism is normally by full immersion in water (occasional exceptions are made to accom-

moderate medical or other extenuating circumstances). If a candidate for membership has been baptized in another Christian denomination or congregation, they need not be re-baptized within the WCG unless they are personally convicted of the need to do so. The pastor (or someone appointed by the pastor), will discuss this issue with the applicant.

If a person is baptized and received into membership at the same time, there will normally be one unified baptism/membership ceremony, and the individual will be given both baptism and member certificates (standard certificates are available from CAD). If the person being received as a member is not also being baptized, the individual will be given a member certificate, generally in a ceremony in the presence of the receiving congregation. The receiving congregation registers the individual's membership using the online member records system.

Minors (those under age 18) may be baptized and/or may become members (including youth members) only with the approval of a parent or legal guardian. When a youth under age 12 is baptized, a parent or legal guardian must be present at the ceremony. It is appropriate for the pastor to invite youth members at age 16 into an adult level of membership.

Transfer of membership

If a member or affiliate in good standing relo-

cates from one WCG congregation to another, their membership or affiliate status will be transferred to the new congregation at their request and with the participation of the receiving and of the former pastor.

Leaving membership

The participation of members and affiliates in the WCG and its local congregations may be ended or reclassified in the following ways:

- A member may be reclassified as an **affiliate** when they have reduced their level of participation in a WCG congregation from that of member to that of affiliate. Such circumstances may be addressed between the member and the pastor, and the membership records will be adjusted accordingly.
- A member will be reclassified as a **former member** when they cease all participation with the WCG for a prolonged period of time or when they, themselves, request removal from membership and do not wish to participate at the level of an affiliate.
- A member or an affiliate will be reclassified as **disassociated** (disassociated member or disassociated affiliate) if their member or affiliate status is revoked by ecclesiastical action of the church for specific disciplinary reasons (refer to chapter eight).

CHAPTER 4

LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES

Biblical leadership ethos

The universal church is comprised of all who are baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ. By virtue of this baptism, which occurs at regeneration, all believers (irrespective of race, gender, age, socio-economic class, etc.) are appointed (set apart) by the Holy Spirit to serve God through the church in the priesthood of our Lord, Jesus Christ. The ministry of the church is Jesus' ministry, and all believers, by virtue of their union with Christ, are appointed priests (ministers) of (and with) Christ. With this appointment comes the impartation of spiritual gifts for the ministry of Christ in and through the church on earth.

The Holy Spirit dispenses these spiritual gifts as the Lord wills and for the purpose of equipping believers for certain ministry functions (responsibilities) in and through the Church. The responsibility of the corporate church (congregations and denominations) is to acknowledge, organize, equip, support, release and otherwise order what the Spirit has appointed and gifted in the church.

Two of the gifts the Spirit grants to the church are those of leadership (Romans 12:8) and administration (1 Corinthians 12:28). There are many valid ways for the church to order these important leadership enablements and functions. Rather than mandating specific forms for such ordering, the New Testament offers key principles that form a biblical leadership ethos that is given to inform and guide church leaders in their responsibilities.

The WCG encapsulates this biblical leadership ethos in the following list of leadership principles that are to characterize all governance and other leadership activities within the WCG's denominational offices and local congregations. While no leader is perfect in living by this ethos, it is the goal that all WCG leaders embrace and be growing in conformity with these principles.

Christ-centered leadership

Church leaders should have their personal identities centered in Christ. Leaders are first, and foremost, followers of Jesus. One of the ways they follow Jesus is by modeling the substance and style of their leadership after the example of Jesus, the perfect leader. Christ-centered leaders view themselves as under-shepherds of Jesus, the great "Shepherd," who is also the "Overseer" of our souls (1 Peter 2:25). Church leaders must follow Jesus in their own lives while co-ministering with Jesus in his leadership of the church.

Love-motivated leadership

Church leaders should order all they do in love. The church is like a building whose foundation is Christ (1 Corinthians 3:9, 11). Church leaders should be careful how they build on that foundation (verses 10-13), remembering that the historical patterns of the church will ultimately pass away, leaving only "faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13).

This love (God's love in us) does no harm to others, "is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrong.... It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always preserves. Love never fails" (verses 5, 7-8). Church leaders should be motivated by this sort of love—the type that finds expression in self-denial and restraint in order that all in the church "may be instructed and encouraged" (1 Corinthians 14:31) leading to a body that "builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Ephesians 4:16).

Love is expressed in and through the church in the form of friendship. Jesus relates to his followers as friends, and leaders are to relate to all others in the church in the same way (John 15:12-17). Whereas a master relates to a servant based on obedience to rules, friends relate to one another through mutuality, trust, respect and interdependence.

Love-motivated leadership promotes the fellowship and caring that is essential to Christian community. The church is to be a community of individuals who have equal standing before God—united in a mutual love for one another that expresses the outgoing, mutual life and love of the triune God who is eternally Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Grace-filled leadership

The Holy Spirit provides structure in the church to avoid anarchy, but in embracing order, the church must seek to avoid all forms of legalism. Grace-filled leaders oppose legalism by modeling and facilitating relationships in the church with God and between people that are rooted in God's unconditional acceptance of people in Christ (Ephesians 2:4-10).

Grace-filled leaders view themselves as shepherds of people's souls (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 2:25), not as policemen of people's lives. Rather than being autocratic and controlling, grace-filled leaders are gentle, encouraging, accepting and helping (1 Thessalonians 2:7). Grace-filled leaders model the grace of God in Christ, which is rooted not in the worthiness of the recipient but in the goodness of the giver. Grace seeks the good

of all those led regardless of personality or merit.

Spirit-led leadership

The Lord, who is the head of the church, sends the Holy Spirit who brings the real presence of Christ to the church and equips the church for Christ's ministry on earth. Church leadership seeks to operate in accordance with the mind of the Spirit by appointing leaders in accordance with Christ's will as revealed through the Spirit's gifting. Appointed leaders should therefore be circumspect in using their gifts in step with the Spirit's purposes and continuing direction (2 Timothy 1:6-7).

The way of leadership in step with the Spirit stands in marked contrast with leadership that relies on the flesh, including reliance on the law as a benchmark of church governance. Great care must be taken not to quench the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19). The purpose of the church's governance structures should always be to serve Christ, to be obedient to the Spirit and to engage in mutual edification in love. Church structures should not be ends in themselves. They exist to facilitate the work of the body of Christ in accord with the Spirit.

Word-directed leadership

Jesus Christ, the living Word of God, conveys his perfect will to the church through the indwelling Holy Spirit, including Spirit-inspired Holy Scripture. Word-directed leaders allow Scripture to be the norm of the church's existence, giving form and shape to the church's corporate life (2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-16).

The principal message of Scripture is the gospel of Jesus Christ contained and conveyed in the apostolic testimony that is a part of the church's one foundation (Ephesians 2:20). Leaders are Word-directed as they keep a clear focus on the gospel, de-emphasizing those things that are peripheral to, or that detract from its essential message (2 Timothy 2:16-19).

Mission and vision-driven leadership

Mission-driven leaders are focused on leading the church in obedience to the great commission—Jesus' command to make disciples (Matthew 28:19). Mission-driven leaders mobilize the church for this work by building God's people up in their faith and equipping them for works of service, leading to maturity and effectiveness.

Vision-driven leaders discern and communicate a compelling vision of the church faithfully and effectively pursuing the great commission. Visionary leaders are catalysts for change—able to lead members to embrace and pursue clear and attainable mission-enhancing strategies and goals. Such change involves birthing within people both new expecta-

tions and the desire to sacrifice to reach forward.

Servant leadership

Jesus said, "whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:27-28). This means that leaders in the church do not lead for personal gain, prestige or power (1 Peter 5:1-4). Rather, they lead as slaves of Christ, appointed as stewards of the gospel and of the many other gifts of God's grace to the church (see 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 and 1 Peter 4:10-11).

In this stewardship responsibility, servant leaders seek not their own benefit, but the benefit of those they lead. That concern is extended to all—the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak and to all races, ethnicities, genders and generations (including the very young and old). Servant leaders view themselves as fellow workers called to be facilitators and equippers who help the members work together as the body of Christ to accomplish the work of the Lord (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Involved leadership

Servant leaders are gentle, "like a mother caring for her little children" (1 Thessalonians 2:7). But gentleness does not mean passivity, rather it is engaged actively, "as a father [who] deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging [them] to live lives worthy of God who calls [us] into his kingdom and glory" (2:11-12). The New Testament exhorts church leaders to be active and involved. They are to "direct the affairs of the church" (1 Timothy 5:17), and "keep watch" over the church like a shepherd watching over the sheep (Acts 20:28).

They are to do this, not by abusively lording it over others, but by serving them (1 Peter 5:2-3). In particular, church leaders have a God ordained responsibility to "prepare God's people for works of service" (Ephesians 4:12). The New Testament emphasizes the importance of church leadership by calling on believers to be properly responsive to their leaders. They are to "respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work" (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13). Believers are admonished to "obey your leaders and submit to their authority ... so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you" (Hebrews 13:17).

Though believers are not expected to obey leaders who teach or behave in ways contrary to God's revealed will, they should otherwise follow those who lead. Scripture teaches that the church is to provide, value and respect leadership. Though the abuse of leadership must be rigorously avoided, leadership

should not be abdicated. Though there is no place for pride and arrogance, leaders should not shrink back from the responsibility to lead.

Shared leadership

Effective church leadership is team-based in structure and collegial in tone where all the leadership gifts in the church are honored and used in ways that foster interdependence (Romans 12:4-8). Such shared leadership is consistent with the scriptural teachings concerning the ministry of all believers who are equipped for service through the multiple spiritual gifts imparted by the Holy Spirit.

Shared leadership is lived out in decision-making processes that emphasize collaboration and consensus building. Consensus is not achieved through an autocratic leader imposing his or her will on the group. Nor is it achieved through voting to determine the majority will. Rather, consensus is achieved when the group is led to discover the direction that best fits its shared mission and values in response to the Lord's direction. Leaders then educate, encourage and in-

spire the group to embrace that direction together by laying aside personal preferences and proceeding forward in unity.

Accountable leadership

Accountability is for the purpose of balancing empowerment and protection. Church leaders invite and encourage their followers to be accountable by modeling accountability in three directions: First, they are accountable to the lead and discipline of the Holy Spirit, including the testimony of the Holy Spirit in Scripture. Second, they are accountable to the whole body of Christ for "each member belongs to all the others" (Romans 12:5). Third, they are accountable to their supervisors who have the responsibility to "watch over" and "give an account" to God for their oversight (Hebrews 13:17). The means by which this accountability is lived out within the WCG is the primary focus of this manual, but it should never be overlooked that the accountability structures presented herein rest on the biblical leadership ethos summarized in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5

LEADERSHIP OFFICES

Ordering of titled offices

The WCG looks to Scripture for guidance in ordering (administering) the leadership gifts that the Holy Spirit graciously imparts to the church. In the New Testament, the details of such ordering appear to be a flexible response to varying needs and circumstances. Applying relevant scriptural examples and principles, WCG Church Administration has established two titled leadership offices: that of elder (oversight leaders serving in congregations and denominational offices) and that of deacon (ministry leaders serving in congregations).

In the WCG, elders are appointed through ordination (with licensing) while deacons are appointed through commissioning. Ordination and commissioning are means by which duly authorized WCG leaders, having discerned God's gifting of individuals for service, appoint those individuals to leadership offices in the sight of the church. Such appointments confer delegated authority and responsibility to perform official functions as defined by the appointees' supervisor(s) in accordance with the parameters and principles set forth in this manual.

Ordination is distinguished from commissioning in that ordination has applicability throughout the WCG (elders serve as the denomination's official "clergy"), while the applicability of commissioning (to the office of deacon) is limited to the one WCG congregation where the appointment is made.

Ceremonies for ordaining elders are conducted in accordance with the denomination's standard ordination ceremony (refer to the WCG Ceremonies book). Ceremonies for commissioning deacons are designed locally (usually involving prayer accompanied by the laying on of hands of the senior pastor and others within the congregation).

Elders (spiritual oversight leaders)

The title of elder (presbuteros in Greek) is conferred on those appointed to serve in the office of spiritual oversight leader (episkopos in Greek). The initial appointment to this office is made through ordination. Assignment to a specific spiritual oversight leadership function (responsibility) and location within the ordained office is made through a time-limited, renewable license. Ordination and licensing both involve review and approval by the denomination (through the DS and the CAD office). The denomination is involved because the office of elder is transferable throughout the denomination as described in this section.

General responsibilities of elders

In general, elders serve as spiritual oversight leaders in congregations and within certain denominational offices. The scope of that leadership involves church management responsibilities including oversight of the spiritual nurture, care and development of the members and affiliates within the ministry segment(s) assigned to the elder. In these responsibilities, elders are typically involved in overseeing and/or providing teaching, preaching and spiritual counsel and in administering church discipline and related accountability processes.

Conducting religious worship

WCG elders are authorized by the denomination to conduct (officiate at) the religious worship of the church within the parameters specified in this section. Religious worship includes regular worship services and special church ceremonies including the two ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and other ceremonies of the church including weddings, funerals, the blessing of children, ordination (of elders), commissioning (of deacons), and anointing with oil for the healing of the sick.

In conducting religious worship, elders must receive authorization from and be accountable for the conduct of that worship to the ecclesiastical supervisor in the locale where the worship is conducted. Such authorization is granted in advance within a specific locale through the issuance of an elder license. If an elder wishes to conduct religious worship outside the locale specified on the license, or if the elder is not licensed, advance authorization to conduct worship must be obtained from an elder licensed to serve as a senior pastor or denominational supervisor within that locale.

Appropriately authorized elders (see above) may delegate the conduct of worship services and ceremonies to non-elders so long as the delegating elder provides supervision. Note, however, that some local laws require that a clergy member officiate at weddings (elders serve as the official clergy of the WCG).

Assignment of elders to leadership functions

Qualified elders may be assigned through the granting of an elder license to one or more of the following spiritual oversight leadership functions (responsibilities):

- **Senior pastor:** An elder who is appointed to serve as the lead spiritual overseer within a chartered congregation. (When two or more elders share the office of senior pastor, the

title conferred on each is co-pastor).

- **Associate pastor and assistant pastor:** Elders in chartered congregations who are appointed to serve under the leadership of the senior pastor on a pastoral leadership team.
- **Small group church leader:** An elder who is appointed to serve as the principal leader of a small group church.
- **Administrative elder:** An elder who is appointed to serve in leadership within a denominational office and is assigned a functional title such as pastor general, superintendent of U.S. ministers, district superintendent, etc.

Qualifications and expectations of elders

General qualifications and expectations of elders are noted in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. These descriptive measures are applied within the WCG through the following list of specific qualifications and expectations of elders. (Additional stipulations related to specific oversight ministry responsibilities assigned to elders are noted later in this chapter):

- Spiritual maturity, defined, in part, as adherence to the code of ethics for elders (included later in this chapter). Note that individuals with criminal convictions that involve the abuse of minors are permanently excluded from being ordained as or serving as elders.
- Recognized leadership ability, including spiritual giftedness and skill in the area(s) of assigned ministry. A candidate for ordination as an elder will usually have served for substantial periods as a ministry leader (deacon).
- WCG membership in good standing, including attendance in a WCG congregation on a regular basis and consistency and generosity in giving.
- Willingness and availability to serve in the responsibilities of an elder as assigned by the elder's ecclesiastical supervisor (usually the senior pastor in the congregation).
- Participation in training as specified by the denomination (regional and district conferences, in-service classes, etc.). Note also that other sections in this manual enumerate additional educational expectations for specific oversight ministry responsibilities.

It is the current policy of the WCG to ordain only males as elders. The WCG doctrinal advisory team is currently reviewing this policy and the related policy of appointing only males as senior pastors.

Selection and ordination of elders

Within a congregation, the senior pastor usually ini-

tiates the process of recommending an individual for ordination (appointment) as an elder (though any member may initiate a recommendation by contacting the pastor). In order to confirm that God is calling the individual to serve as a spiritual oversight leader in the church, the pastor usually first discusses the matter with the candidate to determine ability, availability and willingness to serve. The pastor, at his discretion, may also discuss the proposed ordination with the advisory council and other leaders in the congregation.

If preliminary screening indicates that the selection process should go forward, the pastor asks the candidate to complete an elder ordination and initial licensing application (available from CAD). The completed application is reviewed and approved first by the candidate's senior pastor, then by the DS, then by the superintendent of U.S. ministers.

If all levels approve the application, the senior pastor (if an elder) will be authorized to ordain the candidate on behalf of the denomination. The pastor may ask other elders to participate in the ordination. Such ordination ceremonies are generally performed in the presence of the assembled church where the elder will serve.

An elder's ordination continues to be valid within the WCG unless and until it is revoked by disciplinary action of the denomination or is surrendered by the elder. An elder's ordination is transferable between all WCG congregations so long as that elder remains a WCG member in good standing.

Licensing of elders

At the time of ordination, an appropriately qualified elder is assigned to a particular oversight ministry leadership function (responsibility) within a chartered congregation, small group church, and/or a denominational office through the granting of an elder license. This license must be renewed every five years or when the elder's assigned ministry function and/or location of service changes.

An elder who is ordained but is not currently licensed may conduct religious worship and related responsibilities with the advance authorization of and under the supervision of an elder who is licensed as a senior pastor or denominational supervisor in the locale where the worship occurs. A licensed elder visiting another WCG congregation or denominational office may perform duties consistent with their license for a short duration with the advance approval of an elder licensed as a senior pastor or denominational supervisor in that locale.

An elder's license specifies the following:

- The assigned spiritual oversight leadership re-

sponsibility. Elders licensed to serve in congregations (or church circuits) are designated as senior pastors, associate pastors, assistant pastors or small group church leaders. Elders licensed to serve in denominational offices are designated as administrative elders and hold various functional titles.

- The location where the elder is licensed to serve, which may be a specific congregation, a church circuit or a denominational office (including a church district). Some elders are licensed to serve both in a congregation and a denominational office.
- The date of issuance and the date of expiration (normally five years following issuance).

An elder's license is not transferable between ministry locations and ministry offices. Upon moving, the license must be re-issued to reflect the new location. It must also be re-issued if the elder's ministry office changes (as in the case of an assistant pastor becoming a senior pastor).

An elder applies to have his license renewed (upon expiration) or revised (when invalidated by a change of location and/or office) by using the elder license renewal application (available from CAD). The completed application is reviewed first by the applicant's ecclesiastical supervisor, then by the DS (when applicable) and then by the superintendent of U.S. ministers. When all levels approve, CAD issues a new license.

All existing elders in the WCG-USA will need to be credentialed under the new governance system outlined in this manual. This credentialing includes issuance of a new ordination certificate and (if appropriate) an elder license. CAD will initiate the application process for this credentialing through the elder's immediate ecclesiastical supervisor.

Authority and accountability of elders

Ordination and licensure as an elder grant delegated ecclesiastical authority from the denomination to the elder. This authority is limited to the scope of the appointment as defined on the elder ordination certificate and license in accordance with the policies and principles set forth in this manual. The authority granted an elder through ordination and licensure is subject to the on-going delegation and supervision of the elder's ecclesiastical supervisor(s).

In their responsibilities, all elders (as is true with all church members) are accountable to Christ as their Lord and to the body of Christ, the church. In addition to these general accountabilities, and in accordance with the WCG system of church administration, all elders are directly accountable to their ecclesiastical supervisor(s).

Those who serve as senior pastors are directly accountable to the DS. Those serving as associate or assistant pastors, or otherwise as elders within congregations, are directly accountable to the senior pastor (or to his appointed representative such as an assistant pastor reporting to an associate pastor). Elders serving in denominational offices (administrative elders) are accountable to their immediate departmental supervisor(s).

Code of ethics for elders

All WCG elders are to adhere to the following code of ethics:

1) Responsibility to God

- Be a responsible servant of God.
- Exercise faithful stewardship in devotional life through the use of spiritual disciplines, the gifts of the Spirit and acts of service.
- Exercise faithful stewardship of financial, physical and intellectual resources.
- Accept accountability for personal actions and avoid situations that could reflect negatively on the name of Jesus Christ.
- Maintain sexual purity. In their ministerial responsibilities, elders are not to meet alone with those of the opposite sex nor are they to meet alone with minors of either sex.
- Exercise Christ's servant-leadership.

2) Responsibility to the denomination

- Patiently and prayerfully study all doctrinal materials presented by the denomination.
- Support and carry out all administrative decisions and policies of ecclesiastical supervisors or immediately notify supervisor if this is not possible.
- Cooperate with, and seek assistance from ecclesiastical supervisors, peers and members of congregation(s) in the periodic review of ministerial gifts and practices.
- Show appropriate respect for the denomination and its leaders.
- Support and promote the worldwide mission of the church.

3) Responsibility to family

- Spiritually, emotionally and physically support personal family.
- Be faithful to spouse.
- Be a responsible and dedicated parent to children.

4) Relationship with the congregation

- Provide sound and clear pastoral, spiritual leadership.
- Help members develop and use spiritual gifts.
- Develop and mentor spiritual leaders in the congregation.

- Give sermons that are biblically based, in theological agreement with the church and relevant to the life of the church.
- Be committed to prompt reconciliation of interpersonal conflicts. Have personal courage, exercised with appropriate tact in facing opposition. Encourage members of the congregation to seek help from peers and/or ecclesiastical supervisors if they think it is necessary.
- Be trustworthy in all areas of confidentiality, except as legally bound to disclose. Do not betray the trust of a member by disclosing personal information about that person to others without that person's knowledge and consent.
- Be fair and consistent in dealings with parishioners.
- Honor and respect all cultures, genders and races and age groups.

5) Responsibility to fellow elders

- Respect fellow elders—do not speak against them publicly or privately, considering them partners in the work of God.
- Respect the administrative boundaries of another elder's area of responsibility.
- Treat the office of elder in a manner so as not to be competitive or enhance one's own status or position.
- Serve elder colleagues with counsel, support and personal assistance.

6) Responsibility to the greater body of Christ

- Avoid soliciting members from other Christian church fellowships.
- Seek to work in harmony with other Christian leaders and programs to strengthen the body of Christ and advance the kingdom of God.
- Have respect for the greater body of Christ by not demeaning other Christian fellowships.

7) Responsibility to the local community

- Be a responsible member of one's community.
- Accept reasonable responsibilities for community service, recognizing this is a function of public ministry.
- Encourage the involvement of the congregation in appropriate community events.
- Comply with the laws of the governing authorities as long as they do not conflict with God's laws.
- Take care not to allow political issues to create polarization within the congregation.

What elders may expect from their supervisors

Supervisors of elders will provide support as well as

just and fair treatment for elders, striving to:

- Be accessible and promptly respond to requests from elders.
- Provide sound and clear spiritual, ecclesiastical and administrative leadership.
- Openly and respectfully communicate to an elder any serious complaints brought against that elder.
- Provide reasonable time for feedback to requests for information from elders.
- Handle sensitive and confidential information about an elder in a responsible manner.
- Be sensitive to the personal and family needs of elders.
- Be open and responsive to questions from elders.
- Be subject to periodic performance reviews.

Leaving the office of elder

An elder's ordination and/or license may be suspended or revoked for disciplinary reasons (refer to chapter eight). Such actions, when necessary, are usually initiated by the elder's immediate supervisor and must be approved by the DS (when applicable) and the superintendent of U.S. ministers. If an elder believes he has been disciplined inappropriately, he has recourse through the official appeals process (refer to chapter eight).

An elder may resign from service as an elder. When this occurs, the elder surrenders the elder ordination certificate and license to the appropriate ecclesiastical supervisor and ceases to hold the ordained title. Resignation is appropriate when the elder can no longer, in good conscience, represent the church as an elder in accordance with the stipulations of this manual.

An elder may retire or step aside for a short time from active service as an elder. When either of these circumstances occurs, the elder ceases to be licensed but retains the title of elder so long as the elder remains a WCG member in good standing. Retirement or stepping aside may be appropriate in circumstances that make it impossible or undesirable for an elder to serve actively. An elder who is inactivated may return to active service by applying for re-licensing.

Deacons (ministry leaders)

The title of deacon (diakonos in Greek) is conferred on men and women appointed to serve in congregations in the office of ministry leader (note that it is appropriate in some cultural settings to refer to a female deacon as a deaconess). A deacon is appointed through commissioning to serve in a ministry leadership role in a specific congregation for a specified duration of time.

Responsibilities of deacons

Deacons serve in WCG congregations, leading (directing, facilitating and coordinating) the work of others in conducting the congregation's primary ministries. The diverse ministry leadership responsibilities of deacons are reflected in various descriptive functional titles granted (at local discretion) to deacons at the time of commissioning. Examples of such titles include worship ministry leader, youth ministry leader, women's ministry leader, facilities director, treasurer, head usher, communications director, etc. (Note that the term pastor should not be used in a deacon's functional title. This term is reserved for elders serving as senior, associate, or assistant pastors within congregations and church circuits. If the primary function of a deacon is that of long-term spiritual oversight leadership within a chartered congregation, the person should be evaluated for the possibility of ordination as an elder).

The specific definition of a deacon's responsibilities is at the discretion of the deacon's ecclesiastical supervisor (normally the senior pastor) in accordance with the general standards for deacons and the specific standards for certain ministry leadership roles set forth in this manual.

Qualifications and expectations of deacons

General qualifications and expectations for appointment and service as a deacon are noted in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Specific qualifications and expectations include spiritual maturity; willingness and availability to serve; WCG membership in good standing (which involves consistency in attendance, giving and serving); and recognized leadership ability; spiritual giftedness and skill (or willingness to learn) in the area(s) of anticipated service. Those commissioned as deacons will normally have served well for a time as ministry workers within the congregation where their ability and desire to lead is tested and confirmed.

Selection and commissioning of deacons

Appointments of individuals to the office of deacon (ministry leader) are made through commissioning. A proposal to commission a deacon is usually initiated by the senior pastor, though any member may recommend a person for commissioning by contacting the pastor. There is no formal application process for the commissioning of deacons—the details of the evaluation and confirmation process rest with the senior pastor.

In discerning that God is calling a person to the office of ministry leader, the pastor will discuss the matter first with the candidate to determine willingness, ability and availability to serve. The pastor may then consult with the advisory council and

other leadership groups at the pastor's discretion.

Authority and accountability of deacons

Commissioning to the office of ministry leader confers the title of deacon and grants delegated authority from the senior pastor to the one commissioned. That authority is limited to the specific scope of the assignment as defined by the deacon's supervisor(s) within the general parameters set forth in this manual.

A deacon's commissioned status is valid only within the WCG congregation where the person is commissioned and is not transferable to other congregations. When a deacon moves to another congregation, the commission to deacon is not transferable. If the individual wishes to serve as a deacon in the new congregation, that desire may be discussed with the new pastor. If selected to serve as a ministry leader in the new congregation, the individual would be commissioned in the new location.

Assignments of deacons to specific ministry leadership responsibilities within a congregation are time-limited—the duration of that assignment is at the discretion of the deacon's supervisor(s) under the direction of the congregation's senior pastor. There is no denominational process for licensing such assignments. It is recommended, however, that commissions be granted for stipulated durations (two years is the suggested maximum duration). At the end of the term of the commission, the deacon ceases to hold the title unless reappointed (re-commissioned) to the office.

Such reappointments may be confirmed informally or in a commissioning ceremony. Some congregations choose to hold an annual ceremony to commission new deacons and/or recommission deacons whose terms of office have expired. Others have such ceremonies less frequently, as the need arises. The design of commissioning strategies and ceremonies is at the discretion of the senior pastor.

The service of deacons within the congregation where they are commissioned is subject to the oversight and supervision of the senior pastor (or of another licensed elder appointed to this supervisory responsibility by the senior pastor). Deacons may be removed from office by the senior pastor, with or without cause or notice. In making decisions concerning such removals, the pastor would usually seek the input of the advisory council and other leaders as appropriate. If deacons believe they have been removed from office or otherwise disciplined inappropriately, they have recourse through the appeals process outlined in chapter eight.

Deacons may retire or otherwise step aside from service as ministry leaders. Should they wish to return

to active service, they would discuss the matter with the senior pastor, who would, if appropriate, commission them to a specific ministry leadership responsibility.

Prior to issuance of this manual, deacons and deaconesses in the WCG were ordained and granted a title that was transferable between congregations and continued so long as the individual remained a member in good standing. The WCG now appoints male and female deacons through time and location-limited commissioning to serve as ministry leaders within congregations.

Those previously ordained as a deacon or dea-

coness may retain their title in an “emeritus” status so long as they continue as WCG members in good standing. This “emeritus” title is transferable between congregations. Those previously ordained as a deacon or deaconess may be commissioned as ministry leaders.

An individual deacon or deaconess may request a commission, or the pastor may initiate the action. Final decisions concerning commissionings rest with the senior pastor as specified in this section and in accordance with local needs and the ability and availability of the potential ministry leader.

CHAPTER 6

LEADERSHIP IN CONGREGATIONS

There are various leadership responsibilities within WCG congregations. Depending on the congregation's needs and resources, principal leadership offices are filled by elders (spiritual oversight leaders) and deacons (ministry leaders). To allow for flexibility in varying circumstances, the WCG does not provide detailed, uniform job descriptions for most leadership offices. Within the processes and expectations set forth in this manual, congregations are encouraged to establish specific job descriptions that will accommodate the gifts and availability of individual leaders and the needs of specific congregations.

However, for the sake of unity and appropriate accountability, the denomination provides the following definitions and expectations of the specific congregational leadership offices noted. These definitions and expectations are in addition to those specified for elders and deacons.

Pastors (general overview)

The word *pastor* appears only once in the NIV translation of the New Testament (in Ephesians 4:11). Elsewhere, the Greek word *poimen* is translated as “shepherd”—often as a metaphor for spiritual leadership. Jesus is the great shepherd and his followers are his sheep (Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25). Therefore, pastors in WCG congregations serve as “under-shepherds” who are responsible, under the authority of Christ and his church, for the spiritual leadership and care of their congregations or ministry segments within those congregations.

There are various types of pastors and pastoral titles and responsibilities. The primary (or “lead”) pastor of a congregation is referred to generically as “pastor,” but bears the specific title in the WCG of “senior pastor” (in some congregations the office of senior pastor is shared by two “co-pastors”). The senior pastor supervises the other elders in the congregation who serve with the senior pastor on a pastoral leadership (spiritual oversight) team as associate pastors and assistant pastors (note that associate and assistant pastors often bear descriptive titles such as administrative pastor, youth pastor or children’s pastor).

Senior pastors

Senior pastors are elders who are appointed, supervised and, where appropriate, employed by the denomination to serve as the principal spiritual and administrative leaders of WCG chartered congregations (two or more elders sharing the office of senior pastor are referred to as co-pastors and serve in accordance

with the stipulations of this section). When elders are appointed to serve as senior pastors, they are issued elder’s licenses that specify the scope of the appointment within a single congregation or in a church circuit. Such licenses must be renewed every five years or when the elder ceases to serve as a senior pastor or changes the locale of that service.

Senior pastors employed full-time by the denomination are referred to as employed pastors. Those employed part-time are referred to as dual career pastors and those not employed by the denomination are referred to as bivocational pastors. Certain policies related primarily to the employment of senior pastors are set forth in the ministerial manual that is provided to all senior pastors.

General qualifications of senior pastors

Those appointed to the office of senior pastor must meet the qualifications and expectations of elders (including the code of ethics for elders). In addition, they must demonstrate the ability and willingness to meet the expectations of senior pastors outlined in this chapter. It is the current policy of the WCG that only males are ordained as elders and, therefore, only males are appointed as senior pastors. The doctrinal advisory team is currently reviewing these related policies.

General responsibilities of senior pastors

In general, the responsibilities of a senior pastor involve the spiritual and administrative leadership of the congregation. This leadership is focused on equipping, mobilizing and coaching a team of servant-leaders who work together under the senior pastor’s supervision to lead the congregation in pursuit of its mission. The members of the leadership team in the congregation include (in addition to the senior pastor) other elders who are licensed to serve as associate and assistant pastors, the advisory council, the financial officers, any pastor interns, the congregation’s ministry leaders (deacons) and other leaders.

The senior pastor’s leadership of the congregation is to conform to the requirements set forth in this manual. The exact form of that leadership will vary, however, depending on the congregation’s specific organizational structure, size and needs as well as other local/regional demands, constraints and opportunities. In all cases, however, the senior pastor has the primary leadership responsibility within the congregation and is accountable in that leadership as follows.

General accountabilities of senior pastors

In their leadership, senior pastors are supported by, are directly accountable to, and are supervised by the DS, the superintendent of U.S. ministers and other members of the CAD office. Senior pastors are also responsible to seek the advice and counsel of the advisory council and the other members of the congregation's leadership team.

While the congregation's leadership team members are accountable to and supervised by the senior pastor, they are also responsible to the congregation and the denomination to act on direct knowledge of, or on allegations of, significant offense by the senior pastor. Such action is to be in accordance with the processes outlined in chapter eight.

Appointment of senior pastors to congregations

Senior pastors are appointed to their pastorates by the denomination through CAD. Appointments are made with input from the receiving congregation through the following general process:

1. Once the need to assign a pastor to a congregation is known, the DS consults with the CAD office to discuss available options including the possibility of transferring a pastor into the area, hiring a new pastor or appointing a bivocational pastor or pastoral team from within the congregation.
2. The DS consults with the congregation's leadership (the advisory council and other leaders, depending on circumstances) to explore the available alternatives and to receive relevant input from the congregation.
3. The DS, in consultation with the CAD office, assigns the new pastor to the congregation. If the new pastor is being transferred into the area, that pastor will be asked to visit the congregation for a week to preach in two services and to visit with representative leaders and members in the congregation to help confirm the fit between the pastor and the congregation.
4. Following this visit, the DS will consult with the congregation's leaders to receive their input with respect to finalizing the assignment.
5. Shortly after the new pastor takes office, the DS (or his designee) will participate in a service in which the pastor will be officially installed as the senior pastor in the congregation.

First-time appointments of senior pastors

Those appointed for the first time to the senior pastorate of a WCG congregation are required to complete the denomination's new pastor training course. At the successful completion of that course, they will be given a conditional appoint-

ment to a specific assignment as senior pastor.

This first-time appointment as senior pastor will be finalized upon receiving a satisfactory report in a performance review conducted by the DS after six months of service. The performance review, at the DS's discretion, may include surveying to receive input from the members of the congregation (survey forms are available from CAD).

Following a satisfactory report, the new senior pastor's appointment will be officially confirmed in an installation ceremony led by the DS (or his designee) in the presence of the pastor's congregation. If the new pastor has not previously been ordained an elder, the installation ceremony will include ordination and the denomination will issue to the pastor both a certificate of ordination and an elder's license designating him as senior pastor.

What senior pastors can expect from the denomination

Senior pastors can expect that the DS and the CAD office will maintain open lines of communication with them. Both the DS and CAD will seek their advice and input and keep them informed about decisions that affect their duties and congregation(s). They will also be provided with instruction, assistance, supervision and evaluation of their performance in accordance with published criteria.

Expectations of senior pastors

In addition to meeting the expectations of members and the expectations of elders (including the code of ethics for elders and applicable elder licensing requirements), all senior pastors are to meet the following expectations specific to their pastoral ministry leadership role:

1) Model and teach spiritual formation. Spiritual formation involves teaching and practicing spiritual disciplines with the intent that each member and the congregation as a whole continually grow in imitating Jesus.

2) Preach and teach the gospel. Pastors must preach and teach that salvation is by grace through faith. The Christian's relationship with God is through Jesus Christ, not through obedience to the law. Jesus (and our saving relationship with him) is the gospel.

3) Provide inspiring worship services. The pastor should model and teach participation in corporate worship. Weekly and annual worship services should include congregational input and involvement in designing the worship. Every part of the worship service should be directed toward God, to honor and praise him. This includes well-prepared, transformational sermons. Topical sermons and special sermons (such as dramatic renditions) may be appropriate on certain

occasions, but expository sermons should be the norm.

4) Be a transformational leader. Pastors should lead their congregations to Jesus Christ and to a full understanding and acceptance of historic, orthodox Christianity. The ministry of all believers should be a prime focus. Various needed ministries should be encouraged and developed. Pastoral leadership encourages and sees that these ministries are taking place properly. The goal throughout is that members be transformed to become more like Jesus Christ in their thoughts and behaviors.

5) Model and teach stewardship. Pastors should teach members to practice stewardship in all aspects of their lives: in use of their time, talent and treasure. Pastors should teach that financial giving is an aspect of worship. As teachers, pastors should be generous stewards (it is the policy of the WCG that all employed and dual-career pastors tithe their income; bivocational pastors are expected to be generous donors in accordance with their income levels).

6) Promote small group ministry. Pastors should continually educate the members of their congregations in the importance of being a part of a small group (also referred to as a cell group) and they should keep the congregation apprised of how to start and/or enter a small group. It is a denominational goal to involve as many members as possible in small group ministry. In advancing this goal, pastors are responsible to see that small group leaders are identified, trained and supervised.

7) Model and teach relational evangelism. Great commandment and great commission living necessarily includes relational evangelism. Pastors should therefore focus their congregation's attention on relational evangelism by example, through teaching and by coordinating evangelism efforts in and through the congregation. Such efforts might include interdenominational evangelism initiatives.

8) Participate in continuing education. CAD (through the CAD office and DS) provides continuing education for senior pastors through in-service classes, regional conferences and district training meetings. Senior pastors (including co-pastors) are expected to participate in all three of these forms of continuing education unless excused by the DS. In addition, it is expected that senior pastors will seek to improve their pastoral skills in ways that are appropriate to their circumstances. Means for additional skill development include classes, conferences, and reading.

9) Serve the congregation faithfully. Though many duties can be delegated and small groups within the congregation can provide care and nurture for the members, the pastor and the leadership team

should be a caring presence in the lives of the members. This means, for example, that the pastor should be present at the serious times of transition in the lives of the members such as times of serious illness and times of serious conflict within families or among church members.

The pastor is expected, as much as is reasonably possible, to be present for funerals, weddings and other important occasions in the lives of members. In addition, it is the policy of the denomination that pastors not be absent from personally serving the congregation for longer than three weeks at one time, and not be absent from more than two consecutive weekly worship services. (The DS in exceptional circumstances may grant longer absences).

Absences of more than two consecutive days, for any reason, are to be reported in advance to the DS and the CAD office. Moreover, should a senior pastor become incapacitated or otherwise unable to fulfill any of the duties specified in this manual, the DS is to be notified immediately.

Other areas where pastors are expected to serve the congregation include the following (note that this list is not exhaustive):

- Preach sermons, lead Bible studies and provide other means of biblical instruction for congregants.
- Administer baptism, the Lord's Supper (communion), weddings, funerals and blessing of children ceremonies.
- Pray for and anoint the sick.
- Supervise the maintenance of member files using the standard online system.
- Supervise the administration of the financial management system in the congregation in compliance with the requirements of the denomination's financial system for congregations.
- Supervise the administration of church assistance to needy members according to denominational guidelines.
- Counsel congregants on matters of spiritual significance.
- Attend community functions as a representative of the church.
- Visit members, affiliates and prospective members.
- Provide classes for prospective members and candidates for baptism.

10) Identify, develop, mentor and empower leaders. Pastors should seek to promote church growth by identifying gifted people in the congregation who can provide leadership for congregations now and in the future. Pastors are expected to be de-

veloping more pastors and other ministry leaders and are encouraged to plant new congregations. Related leadership development responsibilities include:

- Arrange for the commissioning of deacons (ministry leaders) and the ordination and licensing of elders (spiritual oversight leaders) according to the needs and circumstances of the congregation.
- Set up and coordinate an advisory council to assist in church planning and administration.
- Set up and coordinate a finance committee to oversee the finances of the congregation.
- Supervise other leaders in the congregation.
- Complete periodic evaluations of any leaders who report directly to the senior pastor (annual evaluations are recommended).

11) Be able to teach and explain The Statement of Beliefs of the Worldwide Church of God **and follow the policies, practices and procedures of the denomination.** All senior pastors are to abide by the Code of Ethics for Elders, which requires upholding of denominational teachings (including The Statement of Beliefs) and following denominational policies, practices and procedures (which includes submitting attendance, financial and other required reports to the denomination in an accurate and timely way).

12) Administer the disciplinary, grievance and appeals processes within the congregation. Within the congregation, the pastor has the responsibility for administering any needed discipline of members and facilitating the consideration of grievances and appeals filed by members. The processes for disciplinary action and filing of grievances and appeals are discussed in chapter eight.

Performance reviews for senior pastors

Each senior pastor will receive a performance review from the DS at least once every two years. These reviews are in keeping with four important commitments:

1. That pastors be accountable
2. That pastors be helped to grow in their ability
3. That members be reassured that their pastors are being meaningfully supervised
4. That pastors be given meaningful and consistent input and encouragement

Performance reviews are conducted in accordance with the expectations of members, elders and senior pastors noted in this manual together with other relevant, published criteria. The review may include a survey of the members to obtain input concerning the pastor's performance. It may also include interviews with the pastor's advisory council or other leadership groups. At the pastor's request, the pastor's spouse

may be present when the performance review is conducted. Within the congregation, the details of any review will be shared only with the pastor.

Associate and assistant pastors

In addition to the elder serving as senior pastor, some congregations have additional elders who are able and willing to serve actively with their senior pastor (and under his supervision) to form a pastoral leadership (spiritual oversight) team within the congregation. Assignment to this responsibility is made through the granting of an elder license. That license designates the elder as either an associate pastor or an assistant pastor, assigned to serve within a specific congregation (or a church circuit).

As a condition of the license, associate and assistant pastors are to meet the expectations of members as well as the qualifications and expectations of elders, including the Code of Ethics for Elders and all elder licensing requirements. Additional expectations specific to their assigned oversight leadership responsibility are as follows.

Associate pastors are appointed by the denomination through the superintendent of U.S. ministers upon the recommendation of the senior pastor and the DS. The employment status of associate pastors may be employed, dual career or bivocational. Associate pastors are directly supervised by the senior pastor and normally assist in the full range of the senior pastor's responsibilities, usually serving in a larger congregation or a church circuit.

The senior pastor defines the exact scope of an associate pastor's responsibilities in accordance with the guidelines in this manual. Associate pastors are expected to participate actively in the leadership training provided by the denomination by attending those training sessions in person, or (when personal attendance is not possible) by receiving the training through the personal coaching of the senior pastor or his designee.

Assistant pastors are appointed by the senior pastor with the concurrence of the DS. The employment status of assistant pastors is typically bivocational. Assistant pastors are directly supervised by the senior pastor or by an associate pastor. Assistant pastors normally oversee a specific oversight ministry segment within the congregation and are often given appropriate functional titles such as "youth pastor," "seniors pastor," etc.

The senior pastor defines the exact scope of an assistant pastor's responsibilities in accordance with the guidelines in this manual. Assistant pastors are expected to participate actively in the leadership training provided by the denomination through the personal coaching of the senior pastor or his designee.

Pastoral leadership teams

In chartered congregations where there is no elder able to be licensed to serve as the senior pastor, a team of elders, ministry leaders (deacons) and/or other leading members may be appointed by the denomination to lead the congregation as a pastoral leadership team. The DS will lead the process for selecting the team, often inviting church members to suggest candidates. The DS will select the team—in interviewing potential members to determine their willingness, ability and availability to serve. The qualifications for the members of the team are generally, at a minimum, the same as those of ministry leaders (deacons).

Members of the pastoral leadership team are appointed for a three-year term of office. There is no formal application process for this appointment.

The appointed pastoral leadership team will, with the DS's counsel and approval, designate one of its members (male or female) to serve as pastoral team leader. The team leader will then serve as the primary point of contact between the team, the DS and CAD.

Small group church leaders

With input from participants in a small group church (SGC), the DS designates one of the group's active participants to be small group church leader. The SGC leader must be a WCG member in good standing, may be male or female, and meet, as a minimum, the other general qualifications outlined in this manual for ministry leaders (deacons).

Though SGC leaders do not bear the title "pastor" (a title reserved for licensed elders in chartered, full-service congregations), an elder designated to lead a SGC will be granted an elder license that confers the title of SGC leader. Other elders in the SGC, while not licensed, may conduct religious worship under the supervision of a licensed elder.

The SGC leader reports directly to the DS. Responsibilities include filing (using e-mail or surface mail) a monthly report with the DS that summarizes group activity for the previous month including attendance and the basic content of teaching given in SGC meetings. SGC leaders are also encouraged to be in regular contact with the DS to receive coaching and other forms of resourcing to assist the leader and the group in their on-going development.

At the discretion of the SGC leader, and based on the giftedness of other members and the needs of the group, certain SGC church participants may be appointed, by the leader, to leadership responsibilities within the group. Typical functional titles for such leaders include group host/hostess (those providing the arrangements for group meetings), worship leader, teacher, youth leader, etc.

Pastor interns

Pastor interns participate in a pastoral internship program to prepare appropriately qualified individuals for possible service as WCG pastors. Usually, interns serve part-time (about 20 hours per week) while pursuing a degree in ministry (or related studies at a seminary, Bible college or similar institution). Individuals not enrolled in a relevant degree program may apply for an internship if they meet the qualifications for elder and show giftedness for pastoral ministry (though candidates need not be ordained).

Pastoral internships typically last from six months to two years. The offering of an internship does not constitute a promise of employment for any specific period of time. Some interns are paid while others volunteer. Members interested in an internship may discuss that interest with their pastor and then request an application from CAD.

The responsibilities of pastor interns vary depending on the needs of the intern's supervisor (usually a senior pastor or DS) and the academic needs of the intern. In general, the goal is to expose the intern to all facets of pastoral ministry through participation in:

- Leadership training including WCG conferences and new pastor training classes, and outside seminars
- Congregational ministries including church leadership, strategic planning and finances
- The planning and conducting of worship including preaching
- Detailed reviews of WCG doctrine
- Community ministry with a peer group such as a ministerial association
- The review of administrative processes required in WCG congregations
- Personal reflection and evaluation through journaling and maintaining work records
- Member visits
- Frequent progress reviews with the supervisor
- The management of ministerial expenses
- Preparation of a ministry development plan
- Other activities required by the intern's school or deemed appropriate by the supervisor

Advisory councils

To facilitate team-based leadership and mutual accountability within congregations, each congregation is to have an advisory council. The senior pastor is responsible to see that the advisory council is appointed and is operating actively and effectively in accordance with this section.

The work of the advisory council

The purpose for the advisory council is to offer focused, on-going advice, perspective and counsel to the

senior pastor concerning significant policy and administrative matters related to the operation of the congregation. The council offers this input in three general areas:

1. Concerning the needs and interests of the congregation, including its overall vision, mission and strategy, and the particular needs and interests of its members, affiliates and visitors.
2. Concerning the needs and interests of the community (or communities) where the congregation ministers (including potential members as well as the larger body of Christ).
3. Concerning the needs and interests of the denomination (including denominational values, doctrines, goals and policies).

The advisory council is supervised by and is directly accountable to the senior pastor. The pastor, with input from the advisory council, chooses the specific issues that come to the council for review and consideration. Those issues are to include, as a minimum, the following:

- The ongoing development of the congregation's vision document, which sets forth the congregation's vision for the future, defines its primary mission, lists its core values, details its key result areas (mission strategy), and enumerates its faith goals and work goals
- The congregation's annual budget (prepared by the finance committee) and any significant revisions to that budget
- Significant expenditures (each congregation determines the threshold amount of expenditures that are reviewed by the council)
- Review of quarterly and annual reports prepared by the finance committee
- The congregation's activity calendar including any significant changes to that calendar
- Significant administrative matters such as the congregation's meeting place, meeting day or meeting time, worship service, etc.
- The instituting and basic organization of the congregation's ministries
- Participation in church development consultations provided by the DS
- Consideration of candidates for ordination as elders and commissioning as deacons (ministry leaders)

The senior pastor is responsible to actively seek out and then carefully consider the advisory council's advice, counsel and perspective on these and related matters. In the case of significant, unresolved disagreements between the senior pastor and the council, either party may initiate the grievance process outlined in chapter eight.

The advisory council is not constituted to direct the day-to-day management of the congregation.

That work is the responsibility of the congregation's pastoral and ministry leaders (pastors, elders, deacons and others), who are accountable to and led by the senior pastor. The advisory council is also not constituted as a board to govern the congregation. The administrative leadership of the congregation is the responsibility of the senior pastor who is directly accountable in that work to the DS. The senior pastor shares his governance responsibilities with others, including elders, ministry leaders and the advisory council.

As a minimum, the advisory council is to meet quarterly. More frequent meetings (such as monthly) are the norm in most congregations depending on local needs and circumstances.

The senior pastor may chair council meetings or appoint a chairperson from the council membership. In either case, the pastor is to be present at all council meetings and is to be otherwise actively involved with the council in order to support, validate, receive and carefully consider the council's advice, counsel and perspective. The senior pastor is also responsible to provide the council with needed information, training and coaching so that it is equipped for its work.

Qualifications for advisory council members

Advisory council members are to be selected based on ability and availability to serve. They are to be active members of the congregation, noted for their wisdom and insight and their ability to work with people. They are to be members in good standing, regular in attendance and generous in giving (in accordance with financial ability). Any such member of the congregation, age 16 or older, male or female, is eligible to serve on the council. Council members need not be elders or deacons though such leaders may serve on the council.

Some congregations automatically appoint to the council the treasurer and/or all elders and deacons (ministry leaders). Such appointment strategies are at the discretion of the senior pastor. Whatever strategy is used, care should be taken to not overload people's schedules and to maintain diversity on the council that reflects (where possible) the diversity of the congregation in spiritual giftedness, gender, race, ethnicity, age, location of residence and socio-economic background.

Appointment of advisory council members

Members of the council may be nominated by the membership as a whole with final selection by the pastor or the pastor may nominate them with final selection by a vote of the members (including youth members). Either way, the members are actively involved in the selection process, and the pastor is able to assist in screening out candidates who do

not meet the qualifications noted in this section.

Following is a suggested process for selecting advisory council members (the pastor may vary the process to fit local needs so long as a participatory process, as modeled in this section, is utilized).

1. Distribute nomination ballots to members (a sample ballot form is available from CAD).
2. Appoint a secretary to handle all tabulations. Tabulate the ballots and place the top ten names on a second ballot, listed in random order.
3. At the next worship service, distribute the second ballot. Each member will then choose three persons from the list of ten.
4. Tabulate the second ballot and give to the pastor a list of the top seven names in order of preference.
5. From these names, the pastor will select several members to serve. A council of five is suggested (there may be as few as three in small congregations and more in larger). The pastor determines the number.
6. Announce and post the names of those appointed at the next worship service.
7. The council and pastor will arrange to begin meeting at regular times.

There is no set length of service for advisory council members. The pastor, in consultation with the council, will determine how often new members are to be appointed. It is recommended that term limits be set in advance and on a staggered basis so that only part of the council is replaced at any one time (a maximum term of two years is suggested).

The pastor may remove an advisory council member with or without cause or notice. However, if a council member believes they have been removed from office or otherwise disciplined inappropriately, they may file an appeal using the process outlined in chapter eight.

A council member may resign from office by notifying the pastor. The process for choosing a replacement may follow the procedure above, or the replacement may be selected by the pastor from the final pool of nominees identified in a recent balloting process.

Finance committees and financial officers

Each congregation is to have a finance committee to implement and administer the denomination's financial management system for member congregations. The committee reports directly to the senior pastor or to an associate or assistant pastor designated by the senior pastor. Membership on the committee is by appointment of the pastor with the advice of the advisory council.

Membership on the finance committee automatically includes the two financial officers of the congregation (the treasurer and the head usher). It is appropriate that these officers be commissioned as ministry leaders (deacons) in the congregation. In addition to the two financial officers, the finance committee is also to include at least one general member. For more information concerning finance committees and financial officers refer to the WCG-USA Financial Manual.

Youth leaders and youth workers

Because youth leaders and youth workers serve minors (children and teens), they are involved in an area of ministry that has special accountability requirements. For that reason, all adults who work regularly in ministries directed toward those under age 18 must undergo a criminal background check (usually involving fingerprinting) and be otherwise pre-qualified and screened using the Youth Program Volunteer Application (available from CAD).

All teens working regularly in ministries directed to minors must also be pre-qualified and screened (though a criminal background check is not required) using the Children's Ministry Teen Volunteer Application (available from CAD).

Applicants (of any age) with prior convictions of abuse (physical or sexual) involving minors are permanently excluded from service as youth leaders and youth workers.

It is also the policy of the WCG that those working with youths do so in teams of two or more to avoid situations where a designated youth worker or leader (adult or teen) of either sex is alone (out of public view) with one child or one teenager of either sex.

CHAPTER 7

LEADERSHIP IN THE DENOMINATION

In addition to leaders within congregations, the WCG maintains various international and national/regional denominational leadership offices. The general purpose for these offices is expressed in the denomination's mission statement:

The Worldwide Church of God is committed to living and sharing the good news of what God has done through Jesus Christ

This mission is pursued through a focus on the following key concerns:

- Building healthy, Christ-centered congregations that are sanctuaries of worship, friendship, and nurturing pastoral care.
- Providing sound biblical teaching through congregations, media, and personal outreach in relevant, meaningful forms for people of diverse backgrounds and ages.
- Expressing the love of God to all through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- Equipping people for Christian service so that the gospel can be known, understood, and experienced.
- Sharing in the work of the gospel with the broader Christian community, acknowledging that we can learn from one another and that Christ's love goes beyond denominational boundaries.

International leadership

To advance the general mission of the WCG, the denomination provides the following international leadership offices located in the denomination's office in Southern California:

Pastor general

The pastor general serves as the denomination's chief ecclesiastical officer. The current pastor general is Joseph Tkach.

Advisory council of elders

The advisory council of elders (ACE) works with the pastor general to determine the policies that guide the ecclesiastical direction for the denomination. Chaired by the pastor general, ACE currently includes Gregory Albrecht, Carn Catherwood, J. Michael Feazell, Herman Hoeh, Ron Kelly, Bernard Schnippert and Norman Smith.

Doctrinal advisory team

ACE appoints and oversees a team to provide

advice to ACE on doctrinal matters including review of The Worldwide Church of God Statement of Beliefs and other doctrinally related church literature. In making appointments to the doctrinal advisory team, ACE considers level of education in theology and related subjects, age, experience in Christian leadership and current responsibilities within the WCG.

Current members of the doctrinal advisory team are J. Michael Feazell (chair), Gregory Albrecht, Carn Catherwood, Randal Dick, Russell Duke, Herman Hoeh, Ron Kelly, John McKenna, Michael Morrison, Dan Rogers, Bernard Schnippert and Joseph Tkach.

The methods of appointment and definitions of responsibilities for the international and USA (national) denominational leadership offices described in this section are set forth in various documents that define the church's constituent organizations. Many of these documents will be revised and/or replaced following completion of the sale of the church's Pasadena properties. Once this process is complete, this section of the manual will be expanded and updated accordingly.

United States national leadership

To advance its mission, the WCG maintains denominational leadership offices within nations and multi-national regions. The office within the United States operates in accordance with the following mission statement:

Working to help each WCG congregation attain its God-given potential

Within the United States, the WCG is incorporated as The Worldwide Church of God, a California non-profit religious corporation. The articles and bylaws of this corporation provide for officers and a board of directors to lead the operational affairs of the WCG-USA in accordance with the due care provisions of applicable law. Current officers are Joseph Tkach (president), J. Michael Feazell (vice-president), Bernard Schnippert (chief financial officer) and Mathew Morgan (secretary).



Joseph Tkach, president

Current board members are Joseph Tkach (chair), Gregory Albrecht, J. Michael Feazell, Franklin Guice, Herman Hoeh, Curtis May and Mathew Morgan (secretary).

WCG-USA denominational office objectives

The denominational leadership office within the WCG-USA involves various leaders and support staff that provide theological, doctrinal, administrative, financial and legal support, integrity and accountability for the benefit of WCG-USA congregations and the denomination in general in the United States and abroad. This work is directed toward the following specific objectives:

- Encourage and facilitate the clear proclamation of the gospel in word and deed in each congregation.
- Provide denominational identity for member congregations.
- Maintain theological and doctrinal integrity in accordance with The Statement of Beliefs.
- Provide denominational leadership characterized by humility, integrity, honesty and faithfulness to the Word of God.
- Provide effective biblical instructional materials, church news and information for members.
- Provide effective preparation, training, selection, continuing education and supervision of competent, Christ-centered, Spirit-led pastors.
- Provide skilled administrative, accounting and legal services in support of the congregations.
- Maintain the official history, legacy and continuity of the WCG.
- Maintain a CAD department that licenses all elders, maintains and supervises a careful selection and training process for potential pastors, appoints and supervises all senior pastors and maintains training programs for all senior pastors.
- Maintain an office of superintendent of missions to coordinate non-U.S. regional offices.
- Maintain a financial affairs and planning department to superintend a system within congregations and the denomination that accounts for and receipts donations and that complies with all federal and state regulations regarding donations, church expenses and disbursements of funds. This system also provides accounting services for all pastoral salaries/benefits and provides accounting and legal services for denominational church business.
- Provide administrative support for denominationally sponsored conferences and festivals.
- Maintain the WCG-USA web site and provide space for local church web sites on the Internet.
- Produce denominational publications, including The Statement of Beliefs, Good Shepherding, the Worldwide Church of God News and various other publications for the edification and instruction of leaders and members.

- Protect denominational interests through responsible legal counsel.
- Maintain an adequate facility for denominational headquarters operations.
- Maintain membership in appropriate Christian organizations and partner with other denominations in denominational-level initiatives aimed at strengthening unity in the body of Christ and building the kingdom of God.

U.S. Church Administration department and superintendent of U.S. ministers

To advance the mission of the church within and through WCG-USA congregations, the WCG-USA denominational leadership office maintains a U.S. Church Administration department (CAD) led by the superintendent of U.S. ministers who reports to the WCG-USA president. The current superintendent of U.S. ministers is Dan Rogers.



Dan Rogers

The work of CAD is summarized in the department's mission statement:

The WCG-USA Church Administration department is committed to building and equipping pastoral leadership and congregations of the Worldwide Church of God in the United States to make disciples who make disciples

CAD seeks to fulfill this mission by focusing its efforts in the following key result areas:

- Provide for the building and equipping of district superintendents who can teach, train, mentor, lead and supervise pastors.
- Provide pastors and congregations with resources that build and equip them for the fulfillment of the great commission.
- Provide and maintain proper staffing of the denominational office, district superintendents and pastors.
- Practice good stewardship with all departmental resources.

U.S. district superintendents

The primary point of contact between a congregation (including its leaders and members) and the denomination is the district superintendent (DS). As a member of the CAD staff, supervised by the superintendent of U.S. ministers, a DS works with senior pastors and other leaders and with the congregations in the district to advance the aforementioned CAD mission.

In this work, DS's provide liaison between senior

pastors and the staff in the CAD office and between congregations and the denomination. DS's supervise all senior pastors, all existing congregations (both chartered local congregations and small group church congregations) and the planting of all new congregations within the boundaries of their districts.

DS's are appointed by the superintendent of U.S. ministers with the concurrence of the WCG-USA president and, as appropriate, the input of existing DS's and of the senior pastors in the respective district. The term of office of a DS is at the discretion of the superintendent of U.S. ministers. DS's are accountable to the superintendent of U.S. ministers and his designees in the CAD office.

The boundaries of districts are determined by the superintendent of U.S. ministers in consultation with DS's, considering such factors as the number of senior pastors, the number and geographic distribution of congregations, and ethnic/language groupings. Current DS's (with their districts) are as follows: Ken Williams (Northwest), Curtis May (Southwest), David Fiedler (North Central), Randy Bloom (Central), Carn Catherwood (South Central), Robert Taylor (Mid-South), Ted Johnston (Northeast), Allan Barr (Southeast), Keith Brittain (Mid-Atlantic), Robert Persky (Florida) and Lorenzo Arroyo (ECG congregations).

What DS's can expect from the CAD office. DS's can expect the CAD office to maintain open lines of communication—to seek the DS's advice on relevant issues, to give DS's frequent input and keep DS's informed about decisions that affect their duties and district. DS's will also be provided with instruction, assistance, supervision and evaluation of their performance in accordance with published criteria.

Qualifications and expectations of district superintendents. Those appointed to the administrative office of district superintendent are elders who demonstrate the knowledge, education, teaching ability and administrative and interpersonal skills necessary to supervise multiple senior pastors and congregations in diverse circumstances. DS's are to adhere to all expectations of elders (including the Code of Ethics for Elders) and meet the following additional expectations pertaining to the relationships noted.

1) Relationships with supervisors and other denominational personnel:

- Be accountable to the superintendent of U.S. ministers and his designees in the CAD office.
- Participate in the formulation and/or review of denominational doctrines, policies and other directives.
- Keep the CAD office informed concerning the condition of all congregations and senior pastors in the district.

- Collect and review monthly church reports from senior pastors in the district. Send monthly district attendance and activity reports to the CAD office.
- Collect and review periodic financial reports from congregations in the district (as specified in the WCG-USA Financial Manual).
- Contribute to denominational programs and initiatives as able and appropriate.
- Participate in the denomination's training programs and classes (unless excused by the CAD office when enrolled in an approved seminary).
- Participate in training conferences and seminars conducted by the CAD office and pursue other means to enhance knowledge and improve skills related to job responsibilities.

2) Relationships with senior pastors and small group church leaders in the district:

- Serve as a relational and administrative representative of the CAD office to all senior pastors and all small group church (SGC) leaders in the district.
- Explain and answer questions regarding the denomination's doctrines and policies. Be a primary source for communication between senior pastors/SGC leaders and denominational leadership.
- Model a faithful, personal relationship with Jesus Christ to encourage the on-going spiritual formation of the leaders and members of the congregations in the district.
- Cultivate an open, encouraging and mutually accountable relationship with each senior pastor and SGC leader.
- Coach the senior pastors to encourage, equip and provide accountability to help them in their personal spiritual formation and in growth in pastoral ministry skills. Provide coaching through leadership classes, phone conversations, personal visits and the like. Extend this contact beyond senior pastors to SGC leaders and other leaders in congregations as circumstances permit.
- Conduct regular performance evaluations with the senior pastors in the district.
- Administer grievance, disciplinary and appeals processes involving senior pastors in the district (refer to chapter eight).
- Lead senior pastors in developing and implementing long-range plans for their congregations supported by district-wide initiatives for training, evangelism, district-wide ministries (such as youth ministry), member renewal, etc.
- Coach SGC leaders in the on-going development of their groups.
- Make recommendations concerning applica-

tions for elder ordination and elder licensing before those applications are forwarded to the CAD office for final review.

- Help identify candidates for pastoral ministry including pastor interns.
- Assist in the process of assigning and installing senior pastors and SGC leaders.

3) Relationships with chartered full-service churches and small group churches in the district:

- Occasionally visit chartered congregations as a representative of the denomination to convey denominational support, raise denominational awareness, and ascertain congregational needs and health.
- Offer church development consultations to chartered congregations to provide focused coaching concerning church development. Summarize findings and recommendations in a report to the senior pastor. Follow up by assisting the congrega-

tion in implementing the recommendations.

- Oversee the supervision and resourcing of SGC leaders by equipping leaders of chartered congregations that sponsor SGCs and by equipping leaders of SGCs sponsored by the denomination.
- Provide for the planting of new congregations.
- Provide for the consolidating, restructuring and/or disbanding of existing congregations and church circuits in the district as needed.
- Provide general oversight of any district or regional worship festivals and training conferences conducted within district boundaries.
- Administer disciplinary, grievance and appeals processes related to congregations (refer to chapter eight).
- Provide assistance and counsel for congregations considering purchasing or constructing church buildings (refer to the WCG-USA Church Building Manual for details).

CHAPTER 8

GRIEVANCE, DISCIPLINE AND APPEALS PROCESSES

Church administration necessarily involves dealing with grievances, extending church discipline to offenders and hearing appeals regarding disciplinary actions. This chapter sets forth the values, principles, policies and procedures related to these matters within WCG-USA congregations (with denominational offices involved as stipulated).

Essential values

By their nature, grievance, discipline and appeals processes involve conflict. Because of the exceptional challenges that conflict brings, and for the health and unity of the church and its members, it is vital that the administration of the processes outlined in this chapter be grounded in the following six essential values.

Love

Love for God and for people motivates the church to invite Jesus to correct his body, the church (Revelation 3:19). The church must act out of the base of Jesus' love as it administers grievance, discipline and appeals processes. Love causes the church to seek to protect the weak and innocent even as it seeks, in a spirit of love, to hear grievances against the accused and then extend discipline to those who are shown to be offenders.

Grace

The administration of such processes must also be motivated by God's grace—his positive regard, lavish care and generous provision for those who, by faith, place their trust in Christ (Ephesians 2:8-10). Through God's Spirit of grace, all people, including offenders, are treated with dignity and respect despite their lack of personal merit.

Healing

Such processes must be administered to advance restoration and healing (Galatians 6:1) rather than to punish and exact revenge (2 Corinthians 10:8; 13:10). When discipline is administered with the intent of restoration and healing, harm (2 Corinthians 7:8-13; 1 Corinthians 5.5), death (James 5:19-20) and condemnation (1 Corinthians 11:32) are avoided for those disciplined, even while others are protected from an offender's sinful acts.

Holiness

Because the church is called to be holy (Hebrews

12:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:7), the administration of such processes must seek to enhance and promote the personal morality and ethical conduct of believers who are being sanctified (made holy) through the indwelling Word (Ephesians 5:25-27). If the church abdicates its responsibility to discipline, its testimony in the world will be hindered, particularly with regard to its influence and power for good. Furthermore, lack of appropriate church discipline often leads to internal corruption and spiritual decay.

Unity

The administration of such processes must be for the advancement of unity in the church. Unity is enhanced when major divisions in belief, practice and attitude are reconciled (Romans 16:17; 2 Timothy 2:25-26; Titus 3:10; Philippians 4:2).

Confidentiality

In administering such processes, it is important for the privacy, dignity and protection of the parties involved that appropriate confidentiality be maintained (1 Peter 4:8; Proverbs 17:9). The grievance, discipline and appeals processes outlined in this chapter provide for confidentiality in ways that are biblically appropriate without promoting an inappropriate atmosphere of secrecy.

Addressing offenses: general process

In Christian community, offenses inevitably arise. Some arise when a participant in the church directly and personally wrongs ("offends") another participant. Other offenses are less personal, as when a member or group of members has a grievance concerning the performance of a church leader or concerning a church policy.

Whatever the precise nature of such offenses, it is essential that they be addressed in accordance with the biblically appropriate procedures set forth in this chapter. Through these procedures, grounded in the aforementioned values, conflict is minimized, the concerns of the offended are given a fair hearing, the innocent are protected and appropriate action is taken to hold offenders accountable and to seek their restoration.

It should be noted that most grievances resulting from offenses within the church can be handled quickly and informally. Because Christ's love in a believer's heart "covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8),

most offenses are quickly forgiven and forgotten with no need for a formalized grievance procedure.

There are, however, times when significant grievances arise that divide members, risk the well-being of the innocent, and/or threaten the effectiveness of the church in its mission. In such instances, it may be appropriate, or even mandatory, for members and/or church leaders to initiate the formal grievance process outlined in this section. Note, however, that this process must not be used for insignificant (trivial) offenses or to pursue a spirit of unforgiveness, revenge or intolerance. Rather, it is given to provide a measured, orderly way to seek mediation in pursuit of reconciliation concerning significant grievances that arise from significant offenses.

This mediation-reconciliation process is informed by the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ recorded in Matthew 18 and by other scriptures that relate to addressing grievances and administering discipline within the body of Christ. Note that the process as outlined applies most directly to peers of generally equal standing and/or authority within the church. In situations involving those of unequal standing/authority (such as between members and pastors, children and adults, etc.), the process is adjusted accordingly. Note also that the church itself (usually through the senior pastor) may initiate the process when circumstances warrant.

As individuals participate in the mediation-reconciliation process, it is essential that all submit prayerfully to the leadership of the living Jesus Christ our High Priest. All participants are urged to approach the process with Jesus' love, compassion and grace and with a willingness to be mutually accountable—seeking together to find reconciliation that strengthens the lives of all concerned.

Handling grievances: formal mediation-reconciliation process

The need to initiate the following formal mediation-reconciliation process begins with a significant grievance arising from an alleged significant offense. "Significant" is of course, a subjective term—and what one may see as "insignificant" may be quite "significant" to another. It should be noted, nonetheless, that this process (with the following five sequential steps), is reserved for addressing significant grievances that arise from allegations of significant offenses, not insignificant, minor irritations.

Step 1: private counsel (Matthew 18:15)

In approaching step one in the mediation-reconciliation process, it should be noted that Scripture places the burden for seeking reconciliation on all parties related to a grievance. For example, offenders

are urged to contact those they believe they have offended to seek forgiveness and reconciliation (Matthew 5:23-24).

At times, however, offenders may be unaware of the offense, or, may simply be unwilling to initiate contact with the offended party. In such situations, it may be appropriate (or even mandatory) for the offended party to contact the (alleged) offender for private counsel.

The offended party will usually initiate the formal grievance process through one-on-one contact with the alleged offender (assuming it is safe and otherwise appropriate to make contact in this way). Such contact is for the purpose of gentle, yet direct confrontation in humility (Matthew 18:4), maintaining confidentiality. The purpose for this contact is to seek reconciliation that involves appropriate accountability and forgiveness. If the alleged offender refuses to meet or if the outcome of this meeting is not satisfactory to the aggrieved party, step two may be pursued.

Step 2: mediation (Matthew 18:16)

The next step is for the aggrieved party to arrange for another confidential meeting with the alleged offender—this time taking along one or two others to assist. The reason for additional persons is not to gang up on the accused but to offer a broader perspective, wise counsel and appropriate witnesses to the process. The purpose of this second meeting is to gain agreement on the nature of the offense and to agree upon a course of action to advance appropriate accountability, forgiveness and reconciliation. If the alleged offender is unresponsive, step three may be initiated.

Step 3: arbitration and disciplinary action (Matthew 18:17a)

In this step, the aggrieved party officially notifies the church of the offense by contacting the alleged offender's ecclesiastical supervisor (the senior pastor or DS, for example). That supervisor will then meet with the alleged offender and others (as appropriate) to help find an appropriate resolution regarding the grievance.

If needed, and otherwise appropriate, the supervisor will render a judgment on behalf of the church. This judgment may include a determination concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the policies set forth in this chapter.

If the alleged offender, now determined to be an offender by the church, is unresponsive, step four may be initiated at the discretion of the supervisor (note that step four may be part of the disciplinary action called for in step three).

Step 4: publication (Matthew 18:17b)

In this step, and in accordance with appropriate confidentiality concerns for the aggrieved and the offender, members of the church may be notified of the general nature of the offense and of the disciplinary action to be administered to the offender. Before any such publication, the ecclesiastical supervisor is to consult with his supervisor and with the denomination's Legal Department. The breadth of any publication will be limited to the circle of knowledge and influence of the offender within the church.

If the offender refuses to submit to the mandated discipline, the offender's membership may be suspended or terminated (including the suspension or termination of any leadership offices as applicable). If the offender successfully completes the discipline (including a mandated plan for restoration), step five will be initiated.

Step 5: restoration (Galatians 6:1-2; 1 Corinthians 5)

When the offender has fulfilled any mandates for restitution and/or rehabilitation, the offender will be restored. If the offender's discipline was previously announced (in step four), the restoration will be announced to as wide an audience as the announcement of the offense. Full involvement of the offender in certain duties within the church may be withheld temporarily or permanently depending on the nature of the offense. Restoration does not always imply a return to teaching or other public ministry responsibilities, including leadership.

Administering church discipline: general principles and cautions

Church discipline begins with individual members actively submitting to God's direction in their lives. That submission includes the believer's response to the prompting of the Holy Spirit to confess sin (1 John 1:8-10) and to examine oneself, especially before the mirror of Scripture (James 1:22-25; 1 Corinthians 11:28-32). To be in a position to help restore others, it is necessary that believers first judge themselves so there will be no hypocrisy (Matthew 7:1-5).

God delegates to the church responsibility and authority to administer discipline for several important reasons:

- To maintain sound doctrine (1 Timothy 4:16)
- To restore and preserve unity (Philippians 4:3)
- To watch over souls (Hebrews 13:17)
- To admonish in the Lord (1 Thessalonians 5:12)

In this work of administering church discipline, leaders must be prayerfully dependent on God's leading. They must appropriately use Scripture for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16-17). They must exercise great

care, knowing that, as leaders, they will give an account to the Chief Shepherd for the condition of his flock (Hebrews 13:17).

Furthermore, administering church discipline involves spiritual discernment (1 Corinthians 5:12; 1 Peter 4:17). Such discernment involves appropriate assessing ("judging") of circumstances, including the actions and attitudes of the individuals involved.

Cautions concerning church discipline

In approaching the administration of church discipline, church leaders must recognize that all Christians (leaders included) are imperfect. All are on a journey of growth in Christ by the power and direction of the Holy Spirit. The processes discussed in this chapter must, therefore, be administered in an atmosphere of love and encouragement that graciously acknowledges the reality of imperfection and that encourages growth as it also seeks to avoid and remove offenses (1 Thessalonians 5:14; Romans 13:8, 15:14; Colossians 3:13-16).

In particular, church discipline should always be administered with the following cautions in mind:

1. The church is not to extend discipline beyond its intended purposes (2 Corinthians 2:3).
2. The church is to forgive repentant offenders. Unforgiveness could result in the believer being swallowed up by too much sorrow (verse 7) and in Satan taking opportunity and advantage (verse 11). It must be noted, however, that such forgiveness, depending on the nature of the offense, does not always mean restoration to a former office or responsibility of service.
3. When exercising discipline, members at all levels are to be treated as family, not as enemies (2 Thessalonians 3:15).
4. Discipline must always be exercised with impartiality.
5. Discipline is to be administered according to published standards and procedures.

Specific processes for arbitration and disciplinary action

In the course of pursuing the general grievance process within a WCG congregation, the church may become involved at various points. In some cases the church (usually through the senior pastor) files the initial grievance. In other cases, the church first becomes involved at step three by providing arbitration and, if necessary, administering church discipline.

The church's participation in the grievance process follows one of two procedural systems: one for members/affiliates (including leaders who are not senior pastors) and one for senior pastors. The reason for two systems is that senior pastors are supervised by

and accountable to the DS while other members (including those serving as leaders within congregations) and affiliates are accountable to the senior pastor. Note also that there are special stipulations in the process when the member who is an alleged offender is an elder.

Arbitration and church discipline process when the offender is a member or affiliate

When the alleged offender is a member or an affiliate (including leaders, with the exception of senior pastors), and the grievance process reaches the point when the church becomes involved, the official representing the church as arbiter will be the senior pastor or an appropriately qualified individual designated by the senior pastor. The arbiter will seek to understand the facts in the situation and will determine if an appropriate process, in accordance with the guidelines of Matthew 18, has been followed up to that point. If appropriate, the arbiter may instruct the parties to return to an earlier step in the process.

Following a finding of facts, the arbiter will seek to help the parties find a resolution of the grievance satisfactory to all, with the reconciliation of relationship between the parties being the desired goal. Particular concern will be shown for the protection of the innocent and the weak.

If circumstances warrant, the arbiter will call for disciplinary action. Such action must be approved by the senior pastor and may involve one or more of the following measures involving the offender:

1. Further counseling
2. Suspension from membership or affiliation
3. Disassociation from membership or affiliation
4. Probation or revocation of official church titles (when the title being suspended or revoked is that of elder, the suspension or revocation must be approved by the DS and the superintendent of U.S. ministers).

As a disciplinary action, disassociation from membership or affiliation is used only in limited and significant situations. One such situation is a compelling need to protect the church from harm (including the spiritual harm caused by divisive behavior). Another such situation is the need to emphasize to the offending member or affiliate the importance of taking immediate, significant remedial action.

A disassociation is effective when the senior pastor confirms the action. The disassociation is effective immediately, with or without notification and prior to the action being recorded in the member records. The senior pastor will, however, make a reasonable effort to personally notify the person being disassociated (by telephone or in writing). This notification is to include informing the offender of the opportunity to appeal the disciplinary action as set forth

in the appeals process outlined in this chapter.

Disassociations of members are recorded by the congregation where the action is initiated using the online records system (where their status is changed from “member” to “disassociated member”). The DS (who is notified by the online records system) reviews all member disassociations.

Arbitration and church discipline process when the offender is a senior pastor

When the alleged offender is a senior pastor, the need for arbitration involving the church usually arises earlier in the grievance process than when the parties are peers of generally equal standing or authority. Some adults and most minors are understandably uncomfortable taking complaints concerning the actions of their pastor to that pastor. In such situations, the member or affiliate may contact another leader in the congregation or the DS to provide arbitration, even before reaching step three in the general process.

Though they are supervised by and accountable to the senior pastor, other leaders in a congregation (such as elders, advisory council members and ministry leaders) are also accountable to the congregation and to the denomination to take appropriate action when there is clear evidence of behavior by the senior pastor that constitutes a significant offense (a breach of a senior pastor’s duties and/or ethical behavior as defined in this manual). When such offenses are observed, or credible reports of such offenses are received, the other leaders are to follow the grievance procedures outlined in this chapter.

When a DS learns of a grievance that alleges an offense by a senior pastor, the DS will seek first to objectively establish the facts concerning the matter. The DS may ask the involved parties to submit their account of the circumstances in writing. He may also ask them to provide (or he himself may seek out) the testimony of additional parties in accordance with 1 Timothy 5:19-21.

If, during this fact-finding stage, it is determined that the person lodging the complaint has not communicated directly with the pastor, they may be asked to do so subject to the concerns about un-equal standing/authority discussed earlier in this chapter. The goal will be to encourage resolution as early as possible in the process while respecting the sensitivities of the relationship between senior pastors and their congregants and the need to protect the weak.

If it is inappropriate to try to do so, or if the parties are unable to meet and resolve the issue between them, the DS will call for a meeting of the concerned parties (in person or via a telephone or video conference). In some instances, the DS may have another church official take his place in this meeting. During

the meeting, the DS will seek to help the parties understand one another's viewpoints and reach an agreement, if possible, concerning resolution of the grievance.

When deemed necessary by the DS (a determination made in consultation with the superintendent of U.S. ministers), the senior pastor will be disciplined using one or more of the following actions:

1) Corrective visit, letter or phone call. A visit, letter or phone call to the pastor is normally sufficient to address most infractions. A visit or phone call will normally be followed with an e-mail message to provide a written record.

2) Suspension. A pastor may be suspended from all pastoral duties when there is evidence of dereliction of duty that, in the judgment of the DS is cause to remove the pastor from active duty while the matter is investigated. Such suspension is usually short term, with a determination made fairly quickly to reinstate the pastor, place the pastor on probation, or terminate the pastor.

3) Termination. A pastor may be terminated from his pastoral duties, if in the judgment of the DS, as confirmed by the superintendent of U.S. ministers, a significant dereliction of duty and/or breach of ministerial ethics makes it inappropriate for the individual to serve as a senior pastor.

4) Probation. A pastor may receive probation rather than termination when the nature of the offense warrants it and there is also reason to believe that the pastor can be rehabilitated in a reasonably short period of time. Probation serves the purpose of alerting the senior pastor that he is not meeting performance expectations and provides him with a set time frame within which he may demonstrate satisfactory improvement. When a pastor is put on probation, his DS will confer with him to discuss the reasons for and the nature of the probation, including expectations for improvement during the probation period. This discussion will be handled in a loving and respectful way, seeking to help the pastor meet appropriate expectations for his performance as pastor.

As part of this discussion, it will be determined if the pastor's congregation(s) should be notified about the pastor's probation. Though notification is often not necessary, depending on the nature of the offense(s), it may be. If notification is deemed (by the DS) to be necessary, it will be made by the DS or by his designee in a way that respects the privacy of the involved parties (including the pastor) while appropriately informing the congregation concerning the terms of the probation.

Probation is usually for three months. This duration is usually long enough to provide adequate time

for the pastor to demonstrate improvement in accordance with a list of expectations that will be given to the pastor at the beginning of the probation period.

During probation, the pastor is expected to seek input from the DS regarding improving his job performance. The DS or pastor may request that another pastor in a neighboring pastorate be assigned to assist.

At the conclusion of the probation period, one of three actions will be taken:

1) Cancellation of probation. If the pastor has met expectations, probation will end.

2) Continuation of probation. If the pastor has not met expectations but has shown substantial progress, probation may be extended—up to a maximum total probationary period of six months.

3) Termination of duties. If the pastor has not shown substantial progress in meeting the expectations, his responsibilities as senior pastor will be terminated.

Arbitration and church discipline process when the offending party is a congregation

Congregations in the WCG are established by the granting of a church charter. That charter calls for all WCG congregations to adhere to “the various proclamations, directives, and doctrinal tenets of the Parent Church” (see chapter two for a copy of the charter).

Should violations of the charter or of other stipulations pertaining to congregations set forth in this manual arise, the DS will contact the offending congregation's senior pastor seeking resolution of the problem. Often such matters are remedied through informal communication at this level.

If, however, the violations continue, the DS, at his discretion, may call for a meeting of the senior pastor and the advisory council and/or another leadership group within the congregation to discuss the alleged violations. If this meeting does not lead to a cessation of the violations, the DS will send formal notification of the violations via a letter to the senior pastor. That letter will specify a date by which the congregation must cease the violations.

On the date stipulated in the letter of notification, the DS, in consultation with the superintendent of U.S. ministers, will make an ecclesiastical determination concerning the congregation's progress in ceasing the violations. If progress is deemed unsatisfactory, the charter of the congregation may be suspended or revoked.

When a congregation's charter is revoked by the denomination, that congregation ceases to be a congregation of the WCG and must immediately surrender and return (or vacate) any property owned by the denomination.

Specific processes for appealing church discipline

WCG members, affiliates and chartered congregations have, by virtue of their official standing within the denomination, access to formal processes by which they may appeal ecclesiastical rulings concerning church discipline. This right of appeal is granted both to those who are being disciplined as well as to those who are the offended party in a grievance procedure.

Process for members or affiliates appealing church discipline

If a member (including congregational leaders who are not senior pastors) or an affiliate wishes to appeal a disciplinary action mandated by the senior pastor, the first step in the appeals process is for that member, leader or affiliate to contact the DS. Such notification may be by telephone, e-mail or letter. Through informal discussions (often by telephone), the DS will seek to help the appellant find a resolution to their concerns. Such discussions may or may not include contact with the senior pastor.

If the matter cannot be resolved through such informal discussions, the DS will call for a more formal hearing (face-to-face, by telephone or video conference) where the DS will interview each of the parties and then seek to help them find a mutually acceptable resolution. Should an acceptable resolution not be found, the DS makes a ruling concerning the matter.

Should the DS's ruling not be satisfactory to one or more of the concerned parties, they may contact the superintendent of U.S. ministers to request that a **district grievance and appeals committee** (DGAC) be convened to hear the matter. The DGAC will include two or more pastors and/or pastors' spouses from within the district and a neighboring DS. The appellant may name one of the people who will be on the committee.

The neighboring DS will schedule and chair the DGAC meeting. The concerned parties, including the DS who made the initial ruling, will be invited to present their concerns. Once all pertinent information has been presented, the DGAC will meet in private to make a ruling. The ruling of the DGAC concludes the regular appeals process.

Process for senior pastors appealing church discipline

If a senior pastor wishes to appeal a disciplinary action mandated by the DS, the first step in the appeals process is for the senior pastor to contact the superintendent of U.S. ministers. If the matter is not resolved in informal discussions at this level, the superintendent of U.S. ministers will arrange for the convening of a DGAC that will include three or more pas-

tors and/or pastors' spouses from within the pastor's district together with a DS from a neighboring district. The appellant may name one of the people who will be on the committee.

The neighboring DS will schedule and chair the DGAC meeting. The concerned parties, including the DS who made the initial ruling, will be invited to present their concerns.

Once all pertinent information has been presented, the committee will meet in private to make a ruling. A written summary of the DGAC's ruling will be sent by the DS who chairs the DGAC to the superintendent of U.S. ministers who will review the ruling and either confirm it or call for further investigation by the DGAC.

Once the investigation has been completed to the satisfaction of the superintendent of U.S. ministers, he will make a final ruling in the matter. In making the ruling, the superintendent of U.S. ministers may (at his discretion) consult with other denominational officials and other appropriate parties. The superintendent of U.S. ministers will notify the senior pastor of his decision via telephone and/or e-mail followed by an official letter of notification.

Process for congregations appealing church discipline

If a congregation wishes to appeal a disciplinary action mandated by the DS (who consults with the superintendent of U.S. ministers in such matters), it may do so by having the senior pastor or an appointed representative of the advisory council notify the superintendent of U.S. ministers of the desire to appeal. If the matter is not resolved in informal discussions at this level, the superintendent of U.S. ministers will arrange for the convening of a DGAC that will include three or more pastors from within the district and a neighboring DS. The appellant congregation may name one of the pastors who will be on the committee.

The neighboring DS will schedule and chair the meeting of the DGAC in which the appointed representative of the congregation, members of the congregation's advisory council, all elders and deacons and the DS who made the initial ruling will be invited to present their concerns. Once all pertinent information has been presented, the committee will meet in private to make a ruling. A written summary of the DGAC's ruling will be sent by the DS who chairs the DGAC to the superintendent of U.S. ministers, who will review the ruling and either confirm it or call for further investigation by the DGAC.

Once the investigation has been completed to the satisfaction of the superintendent of U.S. ministers, he will make a final ruling in the matter. In making this ruling, the superintendent of U.S. ministers may

(at his discretion) consult with other denominational officials and other appropriate parties. The superintendent of U.S. ministers will notify the congregation (through its appointed representative) of his decision via telephone and/or e-mail, followed by an official letter of notification.

Review of appeal rulings

While the right to appeal ecclesiastical rulings ends at the conclusion of the appeals processes noted above, appellants may request that such rulings be reviewed by a committee of the advisory council of elders appointed for this purpose, named the appeals committee. This request for review by the appeals committee may be made only after the last level of ap-

peal by right has been reached and concluded.

Such requests for review by the appeals committee should be submitted to the superintendent of U.S. ministers in writing within 60 days following the rendering of the appeals ruling that concluded the formal appeals process. The superintendent of U.S. ministers will notify the secretary of the advisory council of elders of such requests, who will obtain a decision from the appeals committee and notify the appealing party whether or not the appeals committee will review the matter.

The decision to review or not review the matter is discretionary on the part of the appeals committee and is not a matter of right. A ruling not reviewed stands as ruled.

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