

**NEW JERSEY CHURCH OF GOD
STATE MINISTER'S MEETING
2016 -2018 MINUTES**

ARTICLE 1

That there be a biennial State Minister's Meeting following each general assembly and that we have a Minister's and Spouse Retreat in the off-assembly year. The State Overseer shall arrange the time and place.

That the changes brought about by action of the General Assembly and/or General Executive Council are automatically entered as a matter of updating the State Ministers' Meeting Minutes.

ARTICLE II

That the Minutes of the previous State Minister's Meeting be the agenda for each current year and that the said Minutes be amended as necessary for the new term. Further, that the State Overseer and State Council be authorized to delete all outdated measures.

ARTICLE III - STATE BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

A. ELECTION PROCEDURES

1. That election procedure shall be as follows: nominations shall be made from the floor by ballot. The nominating ballot shall be cast for the number of members on the respective board. If any person shall obtain a majority vote of the votes cast on the nominating ballot, they shall be declared duly elected. Nominees may be eliminated from the ballot by majority vote after the first electing ballot has been cast. No minister shall be eligible to serve on more than one elected board during the assembly period; the State Overseer shall be authorized to submit the names of the two runner-ups to the ministerial body for a vote.

When a member fills a vacancy for less than one year, it shall not count against their eligibility. This applies to all elected boards.

2. That a listing of all Ordained ministers and Ordained Bishops shall be provided for the body prior to the State Minister's meeting. All eligible Ordained Bishops who's personal and/or church reports are up to date shall be able to serve on the State Council or any elected board if elected. All eligible Ordained Ministers and Ordained Bishops whose reports are up to date shall be eligible to serve on any elected board excluding the State Council.

3. The New Jersey State Council shall consist of 9 Ordained Bishops elected by ballot. The Haitian Coordinator shall serve as ex officio.

B. STATE COUNCIL

That the State Council be elected to serve for a two-year term. A member shall be eligible to succeed himself two terms. That when an alternate shall fill the office through vacancies and he serve one year and one day it shall be counted as a full-term.

Any State Council member or any elected board member that becomes delinquent in his minister or church reports for three consecutive months be given 30 days to catch up all reports or be removed from said Council.

VOTING: All credential ministers, actively reporting to the state of New Jersey are eligible to vote for all elected boards.

C. STATE YOUTH AND DISCIPLESHIP BOARD

That the State Youth and Discipleship Board be composed of five Ordained Ministers and/or Ordained Bishops, and one alternate, who shall be elected biennially and serve in accordance to the rulings of the General Assembly. The term of office shall be two years. A member shall be eligible to succeed himself two terms.

Any State Youth & Discipleship Board member that becomes delinquent in his/her report for three consecutive months be given 30 days to catch up all reports or be removed from said board.

All credentialed ministers and assigned pastors are eligible to vote for the State Council and State Youth and Christian Education Board.

ARTICLE IV - STATE PROPERTIES

All State Properties (Office & Parsonage) are to be maintained by the State Administrative Bishop, State Ministers, and churches.

ARTICLE V – STATE PROGRAM

- A. That each church be encouraged to support the “**Kingdom Builders 360**” each month and send a one percent offering to the state office as a contribution to the state office to assist the office in church growth and outreach.
- B. That all ministers be encouraged to support the “**Kingdom Builders 360**” ministry on their monthly report with a \$5 offering.

C. *State Program Deadline for Recognition at Camp Meeting*

1. All monies and records will begin September 1 of the fiscal year and end May 31 resulting in a nine-month report each year, for recognition purposes.
2. In order to receive recognition at camp meeting all monies toward state programs must be postmarked no later than June 5 of the annual church calendar year.
3. Each church nominates a member of their congregation for the Layman/Women of the Year award that will be presented during Camp Meeting. (These nominations must be submitted no later than May 5th of the annual church calendar year.)
4. During each Camp Meeting an award for Pastor of the Year is presented to a pastor in the state selected by the State Overseer.

Criteria for Pastor of the Year Nomination:

1. Timely Church Reporting
2. Timely Minister's Reporting
3. Participation in State Programs
4. Participation in National Programs
5. Church Growth

D. *Prayer Conference, Conventions, Retreats, Camp Meetings, Etc.*

1. That the Prayer Conference, Ministers and Spouse Retreats be left to the discretion of the State Overseer and approved by the State Council.
2. That the choice of speakers be nominated by the State Overseer and approved by the State Council.
3. That the State Convention-services begin Wednesday evening and close Sunday night. A Kids Church for ages 6 – 12 will be provided each evening of State Convention. On Saturday there will be a 5 p.m. youth service & afterglow. We urge all churches to support this schedule with wholehearted cooperation.

Churches will continue to celebrate their own Sunday Morning worship services during camp meeting, however all evening services will be canceled by the local church so that they can participate in the state camp meeting services.

It is mandated by the New Jersey ministers in the 2006 state ministers meeting “that all ministers should attend all state programs, unless there is death, sickness, or secular employment and that all state functions should be announced in the local church prior to the event.”

A copy of the New Jersey minister’s meeting minutes is to be provided for the ministers after said meeting.

4. That each church continues to make a contribution for the support of camp meeting.

Churches Average Tithing Monthly	Recommended Contribution
\$ 1.00 - \$ 999.00	\$100.00
\$ 1000.00 - \$2400.00	\$200.00
\$ 2500.00 - \$4999.00	\$300.00
\$ 5000.00 - \$7999.00	\$400.00
\$ 8000.00 - \$ & up	\$500.00

5. That the Camp Meetings & Mid-winter Prayer Conference places and dates be determined by the State Overseer and State Council.

ARTICLE VI MINISTRY

A. VACATIONS

The State Overseer suggests that each local church give the pastor and his family at least two weeks’ vacation with pay each year. Also, that he be given a love offering.

Also, that the pastor advice his/her District Overseer concerning the person to fill his/her pulpit in his/her absence. That a Church of God minister or member be the person to fill his/her pulpit in his/her absence.

B. PASTOR APPRECIATION SUNDAY

That each church be encouraged to participate in the general church program of pastor appreciation by celebrating Pastor Appreciation Sunday each year on the designated day in April, or a date that is convenient and designated for the local church and approved by the pastor.

C. *Financial Aid to Attend General and State Meetings*

We recommend that each church earmark \$10.00 or more per week toward an offering for their pastor to attend general and state meetings. These monies could be raised through the Sunday School, Family Training Hour, Women's Ministries, special offerings and other sources.

D. *Telephone Calls*

No collect calls may be made to the State Overseer.

E. *Disorderly Ministers*

"...where ministers have had their ministerial credentials revoked for any cause and engage in ministerial activities in opposition to the Church of God, that our ministers and members be considered disloyal in promoting his ministerial activities." General Assembly MINUTES, 44th Assembly, 1952, page 31.

F. *State Official Expense and Honorarium*

When the State Overseer, State Director of Youth and Discipleship, State Director of USA Missions, or District Overseer makes an official visit to a church, an offering shall be received to assist in defraying his expense, and honoring his ministry.

G. *Financial Responsibility*

Every pastor shall be reminded that he is personally responsible for the "tithe of tithes" and Home missions coming into his church, and that should these funds be spent for any other purpose, he can be charged with misappropriation of funds.

H. *Percentage of Tithes to the State Office*

Whereas the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus Christ commits us as a church to the evangelism of the world, and

Whereas the Church of God in the state of New Jersey is responsible before God for the evangelization of the people of the state, and

Whereas the church is committed to this evangelization through the establishment of new churches in each community, and

Whereas evangelism is a most costly endeavor, with the support of new churches and vital concerns, and

Whereas the Church of God in the state of New Jersey is not financially strong enough to underwrite the endeavor of evangelism,

Be it resolved that we, the ministers of the Church of God in New Jersey adopt the following measure:

Tithe Reduction Measure: That each church in the state continue to forward to the state office a percentage that is 1% above the amount being sent to General Headquarters.

I. FINANCIAL AID:

All applications and/or requests for financial aid shall be made to the state office through the District Bishop of the respective district. All petitions to the State Council for financial assistance shall become void at the close of each assembly period, and if desired, must be resubmitted.

J. MINISTERIAL EXAMINATION

That times and places for ministerial examining should be left to the state overseer and state ministerial examining board.

K. LEGAL CHURCH TRANSACTIONS

1. Church property deeds must be recorded and locations and plans for new church buildings, parsonages, additions, or major remodeling shall be submitted to and approved by the State Administrative Bishop, State Council and District Bishops, with periodic checks by the District Bishop. The State Council will serve as the State building committee and use the New Jersey State Building guidelines when approving all building programs, purchase of property, and loans.
2. Each pastor shall familiarize himself with the laws of the state of New Jersey before negotiating property transactions, electing trustees, and buying or selling church properties. It must be approved by the Circuit Court in the county or city where the transaction is taking place and the State Office.

L. EXCLUDING MEMBERS

That before any action is taken on excluding members, the local pastor shall notify the District overseer no less than three weeks prior to said conference. Also, each pastor shall clear this with the State Overseer before turning out the members. We must take the scriptural approach to excluding members.

M. TREASURER ELIGIBILITY

The spouse of a pastor shall not serve as the treasurer of the church. (In the event that there is no one else qualified in the congregation to serve as church treasurer the spouse of the pastor may be appointed as treasurer after it has been discussed and agreed upon by the state overseer and the pastor.

N. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DISTRICT OVERSEER

1. It shall be the responsibility of the District Overseer to inspect each local church and parsonage located on their district annually. This inspection is necessary to insure that properties are properly insured and properly maintained. The report of the inspection is to be submitted to the State Office by August 31st each year. (Inspection forms will be provided by the state office.)
2. Each District Overseer is also responsible to check on the insurance status of the church properties, furtherance statements for property tax exempt status, Articles of Incorporation & Bylaws, and State Tax Exempt number (ST5). It is illegal for a church to use the State Office's (EIN) or New Jersey Sales Tax Exempt number (ST5).
3. Each District Overseer will check the payment history in each church; insuring that bills, mortgages, insurance, and reports are paid in a timely manner.
4. Each District Overseer will check the current status of reporting for each church on their respective district, and make sure all reports and moneys are submitted to the State and General Offices in a timely manner.
5. It shall be the duty of the District Overseer to see that all ministers on his district are actively engaged in ministry and reporting faithfully to the State, and General Offices in a timely manner.

ARTICLE IX – WORLD MISSIONS

INTRODUCTION: Statement of Ministry

Church of God World Missions affirms the biblical truth that God is a missionary God. The Triune God acts for the redemption of man: The Father ordered the plan of salvation, the Son actuated it and the Holy Spirit executes it. The Father sent the Son; the Son gave His life in obedient sacrifice; and the Holy Spirit draws mankind to salvation.

Building on this understanding of the nature of God, Church of God World Missions seeks to be the embodiment of His sending and seeking, finding its mission statement in Romans 16:25, 26: “Now to Him who is able to establish you by my Gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations

might believe and obey Him-to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ, Amen.
(NIV)

STATE WORLD MISSIONS BOARD

1. Appointment

That the State Administrative Bishop shall biennially appoint a World Missions Board. The Board Members shall be eligible to serve two consecutive terms.

That the Chairman of the Board shall serve as the state representative of World Missions.

That the Board shall consist of not less than three and not more than five members and may consist of ministers and/or lay members.

2. Duties and Responsibilities

To promote the state World Missions conferences, banquets, and fundraisers.

DISTRICT MISSIONS REPRESENTATIVE

1. Selection

That each District Overseer by virtue of this office serve as the District Missions Representative.

2. Duties and Responsibilities

He shall be responsible for the promotion of World Missions programs in the churches on their district.

LOCAL MISSIONS COMMITTEE

Each pastor is asked to appoint a local missions committee for his church. The chairperson will serve as the local mission's representative. The representative's name should be sent to State Office and New Jersey World Missions Representative Martin Taylor

1. Selection

The local church missions committee is appointed by the local church Pastor.

2. Duties and Responsibilities

Shall have primary responsibility for assisting the pastor in establishing and maintaining a World Missions program in the church.

Shall present a periodic report on mission activity in the church.

Shall maintain a mission's bulletin board or interest center in the church using material and suggestions sent by the state mission representative, missionaries, or World Missions.

Shall keep missions prayer requests before the church.

A. THAT EACH CHURCH BE ENCOURAGED TO:

1. Observe **Missions Heritage Sunday**. The suggested date is the first Sunday in October or another Sunday in October. Support materials can be obtained from the Church of God World Missions Department at 423-472-3361.
2. To participate in the **Christ's Birthday Offering** which is used for the hunger and Disaster Relief Fund of World Missions. The suggested date is the first Sunday in December. Each family is encouraged to contribute a minimum of \$20.00 as a Christmas gift to assist with demands for funds created by famines, emergencies and disasters which occur regularly around the world. Support materials can be obtained from the Church of God World Missions Department.
3. To participate in the **Love the World Sunday** on the second Sunday in February. Members of the congregation should be encouraged to join the Dollar-A-Week program, which supports missionaries on the field. Support materials will be supplied by World Missions.
4. To participate in the **Day of Prayer for World Missions**, on the first Saturday and Sunday of March. Support materials will be supplied by World Missions.
5. To participate in the **Humanitarian Sunday** on the First Sunday in June. These funds are used for urgent humanitarian needs which arise around the world. Support materials will be supplied by World Missions.

ARTICLE VII – STATE YOUTH AND DISCIPLESHIP

- A. That the State Youth and Discipleship Program include the following:
1. That we encourage each local church to send representatives to the National Youth and Children's Leaders Conferences.
 2. That we encourage the youth of every congregation to participate in the **YWEA Project**.

B. SUNDAY SCHOOL MINISTRY/ CELL GROUP MINISTRY

We resolve to reaffirm our commitment to the ministry of the **Sunday School/ and cell groups** and we resolve to continue to implement new methodology of imparting God's Word as it relates to the daily life of the believer in changing times. We encourage our local churches to evaluate and consider new models of Sunday School, as well as exploration of methodology to build the Sunday School (focus on the Sunday School Resource Manual/Enlargement Campaign is available through the International Youth and Discipleship Department). That we encourage our churches to use the New Life Sunday School curriculum in order to maintain consistent, thorough, and biblically sound teaching and discipleship in our Sunday School program.

C. DISCIPLESHIP

1. That we support an annual state Christian education seminar endeavoring to involve all local youth and Christian education workers to enhance their skills and talents and better serve our local congregations.
2. That each local church, where possible, establish a director of training who will use the **AIM (Advance in Ministry) program** as an on-going enhancement of the knowledge and skills of youth and Christian education leaders and teachers.
3. That renewed emphasis is placed on Christian education as we embrace the 2010-2012 Sunday School emphasis, "Sunday School Plus, The Heartbeat of Discipleship", a call to study and discipleship in the local church.
4. That each church be encouraged to subscribe all its' workers to *the Leadership*, the official Christian education magazine for the Church of God.

D. FAMILY TRAINING HOUR

1. That each church places an emphasis on discipleship and every church is urged to plan a discipleship-training program for each level to be conducted through Family Training Hour.
2. That in the summer or early fall each church establish a planning week for Family Training Hour,
3. That we support youth training programs such as, *Ignite*, in the local church.

E. FAMILY MINISTRY

That state leadership, district overseers and all local pastors and churches in New Jersey utilize the resources of the Church of God Department of Family Ministries.

F. YOUTH MINISTRIES

1. That each local church give high priority to its' ministry to young people by enlisting leadership, supplying resources and under girding with prayer.
2. That each local church be encouraged to join the Church of God National Youth Leaders Association.
3. That we have a renewed emphasis placed on the New Jersey Youth Leaders Association and that each local church strives to have a minimum of one active member in the association.
4. That each local church utilizes the Youth and Discipleship Video Magazine to promote the department's ministry of YWEA.
5. That we support youth training programs such as, *Ignite*, in the local church.
6. That youth and young adults take advantage of the short-term missions' experiences offered through STEP.
7. That each local church support the launch of a training program for parents that would help to improve the relationships with their teenagers and to instruct their teens to positive biblical morality (*see 61st General Assembly Minutes Resolution*).
8. That each church encourage their junior and senior high students to attend Lee University Day each spring and where possible, provide support for their attendance of the same.
9. That the Youth Ministry Certification program be used as a developmental tool for excellence in youth ministry in our local churches.

G. CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

1. That each local church place a priority on Children's ministries and planning a comprehensive program.

2. That each church use the Covenant to Nurture Our Children materials which are designed to bring all our children to salvation, sanctification, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, water baptism, church membership and discipleship by age twelve.
3. That each church earnestly endeavors to organize a Children's Church ministry. With a well-planned special services for the respective ages.
4. That if possible each church sponsor an annual VBS (Vacation Bible School) or Kids Crusade. And that a special plan be outlined to enroll un-churched children; and that a report on VBS be sent to the State Youth and Discipleship Director.
5. That the local children's leaders be encouraged to attend the National Children's Ministry Conference (date and location to be announced).
6. That we encourage those individuals who are called to children's ministry to accept the call and challenge, and that we support them and assist them with preparation and training. (*Reaching, Teaching, and Pastoring Kids* is a certification program used for training local children's workers). Those completing levels II and III can be certified through the National Children's Leaders Association.
7. That during Camp Meeting worship services, a kids service should also be provided for ages 6-12.

H. DISTRICT YOUTH RALLIES

1. That we establish ***an annual*** state youth rally to encourage and build local church youth ministries and provide district and state unification of young people.
2. Further, that a freewill offering be taken at the State and district rallies and ***after expenses are met at district rallies, 50% remain on the district and 50%*** be given to the state youth department.

I. TEEN TALENT AND JUNIOR TALENT

1. That we encourage our young people to become involved in Teen Talent to enhance talents and skills and glorify God. Further, that each area of competition

be included in the state Teen Talent program; music, art, writing, drama, and Bible.

2. That we provide an option to an off year Junior and Teen Talent program to encourage the development of talent in our children and teens.

J. STATE YOUTH AND DISCIPLESHIP AWARDS

That the State Youth and Discipleship Department under the guidance of the State Youth Director and State Administrative Bishop be privileged to set up its own program and that it be reflective of the total Christian Discipleship ministries that are in vogue in our state and that no church be considered for an award that has not complied with the minimum requirements of the Christian Discipleship program.

K. DISTRICT YOUTH AND DISCIPLESHIP DIRECTOR

Duties and Responsibilities:

Work closely and cooperatively with the State Youth and Discipleship Director.

To assist the District Overseer in the programs of youth and Christian Discipleship on the district. Work in complete harmony and cooperation with him in promoting the work in local churches on the district.

Visit each church on the district and become acquainted with the youth and Discipleship programs, leaders, and young people.

Promote *Leadership* magazine and other publications pertaining to the ministry of youth and Discipleship.

Outline definite plans to promote the general and state programs, promoting each ministry as set forth by the respective departments.

Conduct annual district rallies that are well planned, that have youth appeal and that help build a spirit of cooperation and fellowship on the district.

Stimulate interest on behalf of the Church of God Bible schools and colleges: Lee University (Cleveland, TN), Patton University (Fresno, CA).

Avail him/herself to training opportunities such as state and general conventions, leadership training meetings, National Youth Leaders Association, New Jersey YLA and District Director's Retreats.

Discuss plans and projects with his/her District Overseer and agree on dates, procedures and responsibilities.

1. Each district shall have a District Youth and Discipleship Director who shall be nominated by the District Overseer and appointed by the State Youth and Discipleship Director.
2. That special emphasis be placed on accepting the responsibilities of the District Youth and Discipleship Directors as outlined in the District Director's job description.
3. Further, that the DY&D Director give full cooperation to the State Youth and Discipleship director and department for the full implementation of the State Youth and Discipleship Program.
4. That we sponsor a DY&D Director's conference for the purpose of training the district director for more effective service. Further, if additional meetings are needed, they would be subject to approval of the State Overseer and under the direction of the State Youth and Discipleship Director

L. STATE YOUTH AND DISCIPLESHIP BOARD

Duties and Responsibilities:

The board shall meet as often as the State Director of Youth & Discipleship and/or Administrative Bishop deem necessary.

The board shall counsel with and assist the State Administrative Bishop and State Discipleship Board in drafting and promoting a program for Youth and Discipleship for the local churches in the state, to be ratified by the ministers of the state.

The board shall, with the State Director, plan and conduct a state youth camp(s) and/or other state youth activities as deemed necessary in the state.

That special emphasis is placed on accepting the responsibilities of the State Youth and Discipleship Board membership as outlined in the General Assembly Minutes Supplement.

Further, that the State Youth and Discipleship Board members give full implementation of the State Youth and Discipleship programs.

M. CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Each church shall follow the youth program as outlined in the church planning guide plus those additional dates decided on within the state.

N. YOUTH CAMP

1. That each church and pastor promote the youth camp ministry and that enthusiastic interest be given to encourage the youth to attend.
2. That each State Youth Board Member and DYDD be encouraged to work at least one week, if needed and possible. And each pastor assists the youth department in the recruitment of competent persons to serve on the youth camp/summerfest staff.
3. That when a pastor signs the application for an applicant from the local church, whether a camper or a staff, this is to be considered a recommendation of that person. **ALL STAFF MUST SUBMIT TO A BACKGROUND CHECK with protectmyministry.com.**
4. That the place, number and dates of youth camps/Summerfest events be left to the Youth and Discipleship Director and the State Youth and Discipleship Board, with the approval of the State Overseer.

O. NORTHEAST WINTERFEST

1. That each local church encourage its' youth leader and youth to attend Northeast Winterfest in Rochester, New York, or Winterfest at Ocean City, Maryland as a winter retreat activity and that promotion be given to this event.

P. SINGLE ADULTS MINISTRIES

That each church emphasize and support single adult ministries.

That a state singles ministry committee be appointed by the State Youth and Discipleship Director, under the supervision of the State Overseer, for the purpose of working with the director and State Youth and Discipleship Board in the carrying out our state singles ministry.

That each local church give ministry attention to single adults members in the local congregation. Special events planned for the singLes are International Singles Conference, Singles Retreat in the state sponsored by the state department.

Q. LOCAL CHURCH LEADERSHIP

That some type of leadership conference “**School of the Prophets**” be planned for the purpose of giving assistance to our local churches in the proper development of church leadership and its role in the local setting. That this be done as soon as it is feasible.

R. CAMP MEETING ACTIVITIES

That youth activities be planned as the schedule allows and under the approval of the State Overseer. Such activities should include: Kids' Camp Meeting, Afterglows, Awards, etc.

S. ANNUAL FAMILY DAY

That we continue to support and plan some type of Family Day outing for our state, when feasible, for the purpose of under girding and supporting the family unit and underscoring its importance.

T. COLLEGIATE MINISTRY

That local churches establish campus outreach ministries in area colleges and universities and involve students in local church ministries.

That each pastor encourage the participation of youth in the College Days of Church of God Bible schools and colleges.

That each local church honor college graduates in the Graduates Recognition Sunday each year.

U. BOYS CLUB MINISTRIES

That every church endeavor to sponsor a club ministry program for boys in their local church and community. That consideration be given to the review of the Pioneers for Christ boys club curriculum written by Church of God men. (A review packet can be obtained by calling the International Department of Youth and Christian Education at (423) 478-7224.

State Girls Club Coordinator

That the wife of the State Director of Youth & Discipleship or a woman assigned by the State Women's Discipleship President serve as State Girls Clubs Coordinator. She is to promote Girls Clubs: YLM's, Joy Belles, and Blue Belles.

That each local Women's Discipleship engage in teaching the principles of scripture to girls and young women according to Titus 2:3-5 and that the State Girls Clubs Coordinator and/or the International Department of Women's Discipleship be consulted for appropriate materials and ideas for such ministry.

A. State Girls Club Board:

The State Girls Club Board shall **biennially** be appointed by the State Women's Discipleship President and the Girls Club Coordinator. The Board shall consist of five women. No board member shall be eligible to serve more than three consecutive terms.

Girls Clubs Activities and Awards: It is recommend:

1. That each church strive to promote Girls Clubs in their local church. And that each

Counselor's name and address be sent to the Girl's Club Coordinator.

2. That the Girls Clubs in each church set aside a time in February to promote National Girls Club Week.
3. That a Statewide Girls Clubs Activity is to be held each year.
4. That Clubs and counselors be recognized at the yearly Girls Club Jamboree.

Awards that can be earned:

1. Translation of Literature
2. Girls Clubs Home Missions
3. YLM of the Year
4. Joy Belle of the Year
5. Blue Belle of the Year
6. Counselor of the year for each club.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION: Child and Youth Sexual Abuse

Lawsuits against ministers and churches, as it relates to sexual abuse of minors, are on the increase. This is a subject that every pastor and lay leader must become more informed about. I am asking every pastor and church to begin now, taking steps that can help make the church safe from child sexual abuse. You will find that these lawsuits are almost always based on the negligence of the church and/or pastor in the areas of screening and supervising workers. The first step every church should take is to prepare a proper application form for all church workers. It is necessary that the two legal questions concerning a conviction record and child abuse conviction be included on the application.

It is necessary for your protection and the protection of the church, to have every church worker (volunteer or compensated) to fill out a screening form. This includes those who are presently working in the church and those who desire to become workers in the church. Those who are working with children and youth should be interviewed in more detail.

If a person has been convicted of sexual abuse of a minor, they are never to be used by the church to work with children or youth in any capacity. A complete background check should be made on anyone who is going to work with minors' protectmyministry.com is one screening company to consider. The check should include talking with pastors of churches where the person has attended in the past.

WHY CHURCHES AND CHURCH LEADERS ARE SUED

Most of the lawsuits filed against churches for acts of child molestation have alleged that the church was legally accountable either on the basis of *negligent hiring or negligent supervision*. Both theories of liability are pivotal issues. The term *negligence* generally refers to conduct that creates an unreasonable risk of foreseeable harm to others. It connotes carelessness, heedlessness, inattention, or inadvertence. Negligent hiring simply means that the church failed to act responsibly and with due care in the selection of workers (both volunteer and

compensated) for positions involving the supervision or custody of minors. A church may exercise sufficient care in the hiring of an individual, but still be legally accountable for acts of molestation on the basis of negligent supervision. Negligent supervision means that a church did not exercise sufficient care in supervising a worker.

Churches need to understand the extent of their liability. Churches are not “guarantors” of the safety and well-being of children. They are not absolutely liable for every injury that occurs on their premises or in the course of their activities. Generally, they are responsible only for those injuries that result from their negligence. Victims of molestation who have sued a church often allege that the church was negligent in not adequately screening applicants or for not providing adequate supervision. As noted above, some churches are willing to use just about anyone who expresses an interest in working in a volunteer capacity with the youth in the church (e.g., boys or girls programs, Sunday School, children’s choir, nursery, teenagers, camp). Applicants for compensated positions may not be extensively screened or closely supervised!

D. Assume that an accident of abuse occurs at your church, and that the minister is asked to testify during the trial. The victim’s lawyer asks, “What did you or your staff do to prevent this tragedy from occurring--what procedures did you utilize to check the molester’s background and supervise his/her work with children?” What would you as a minister say? If the answer is “nothing,” you can well imagine the jury’s reaction. The only question in the jurors’ minds at this point is the size of the verdict.

E. To ensure the safety of our youth all personnel ministry/working with the youth must have a background check and the individual or the local church will bear the cost of the background check.

ARTICLE VIII – WOMEN’S DISCIPLESHIP

A. National Program

That the New Jersey Women’s Discipleship promote the programs outlined by the National Women’s Disciples Department.

Purpose & Objective:

To encourage spiritual growth, personal development, and leadership among women and to contribute to the general welfare to the home, church, community and world.

B. State Program

That each church have an organized Women’s Discipleship in keeping with the *Minutes of the General Assembly* (71st, 2004, pp.200-201) and encourage each Women’s Discipleship to obtain a copy of the Resource and Guide Book. (Available – Women’s Discipleship Department, P.O. Box 2430 Cleveland TN 37320. Phone: (423) 478-7170 visit Women’s Ministries online at www.womensministries.cc.)

That the Women’s Discipleship have an annual Women’s Retreat during the fall season, and an annual seminar/convention the second weekend in March.

C. State Women’s Discipleship Board

The State Women's Ministries President shall *biennially* appoint a State Women's Board. The Board shall consist of five women. No board member shall be eligible to serve more than three consecutive terms.

The Board shall work with the direction of the State Women's Discipleship President. Each Board member must be a promoter of the Women's Discipleship programs and must have an active local Women's Discipleship.

D Annual Awards

That the Women's Discipleship annual awards be distributed at the annual Women's Discipleship seminar/convention. The purpose of rewards is to simply give recognition for exceptional participation.

1. Total monies raised
2. Church of God Home for Children (Smokey Mountain HFC)
3. New Jersey Home Missions
4. Covenant Sister Ministry
5. WWAM (Women With A Mission) Project

F. Monthly Reports

Women's Discipleship reports should reach the state office by the **5th of each month**. Each local Women's Discipleship be encouraged to tithe in keeping with scripture, and this tithe accompany the report along with contributions made to any other designated area as per report form each month.

G. State Office/Parsonage

That the Women's Discipleship be encouraged to take on a Home Missions project to assist in the provision of the state office and parsonage by holding two fund raisers each year at the local level. 50% of funds raised should be sent to the State Women's Discipleship Department, and 50% remain in the local Women's Discipleship - treasury.

H. International Women's Conference

That the women of our state be encouraged to attend the Renewal Conference,

I. Women With a Mission (WWAM)

That each woman participate in the "**Women With A Mission Project**."

J. Bible Study

That each local Woman's Discipleship conducts a monthly group Bible study, encourage scripture memorization and personal daily Bible devotions. The Bible study "**Prayer: The**

Heartbeat of the Church” by Doug Small can be ordered through the International Women’s Ministries by calling 423-478-7891.

K. Prayer and Fasting

That each local Women’s Discipleship encourage one day weekly for fasting and prayer.

Silent Suffering – Silent Shame

That the Women’s Discipleship pay particular attention to minister to women who are being **abused**. (A video is available to assist with this ministry.)

M. Smoky Mountain Home for Children

That each local church in keeping with the scriptural mandate to care for the fatherless (e.g., James 1:27), regularly support the Smoky Mountain Children’s Home. It is further recommended that each local church receive an offering for such case on Mother’s Day according to the Minutes of the General Assembly (49th A., 1962,p.37 as quoted in 71st, 204,p.147: “**Mother’s Day** shall be set apart as Home for Children Day, and a **special offering** shall be received for the Home for Children.”)

N. Covenant Sisters

The States and churches within the United States are divided into four Covenant Groups of 10 to 12 states. Sometimes because of a catastrophic event or a special need within a mission or borderline mission state others in their covenant group are ask to assist them. .

ARTICLE X USA Missions

A. PLANTING NEW CHURCHES

That we seek to attain 10% church/ attendance growth each year during the 2016-2018 General Assembly period by assimilation, amalgamation and new field evangelism. Therefore we are asking each Region to organize a minimum of one church biennially for the next two years. That the evangelism program be under the supervision of the State Director of USA Missions.

That every **new mission** organized for the first year of its existence sends a monthly report (but no funds) to the state office. After six months they shall meet with the State USA Missions Director, District Pastor and pastor of the Mothering Church (if applicable) to evaluate the progress. After the first year the pastor shall meet with the State Administrative Bishop, State Council, and District Pastor, and Senior Pastor of the Mothering Church to evaluate the work and determine if the church is ready to be officially organized, remain a mission, or disband.

That the District Pastors of New Jersey serve as the State Evangelism Board and work closely with all new missions and small churches and report back to the State USA Missions Director quarterly of the progress of the churches or missions on their district.

That when a “**Mother Church**” organizes a new mission, the Senior Pastor of the Mothering Church shall mentor the new pastor and mission for the first year and that all attendance be included on the Mother Churches monthly report for the first year.

B. PASTORAL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

That we conduct pastoral workshops for the purpose of inspiration, orientation, motivation, information and encouragement in perfecting skills for a more efficient pastoral ministry in each local church. And that each pastor be encouraged to attend a minimum of one training conference each year sponsored by the general or state offices. Classes for pastors during “School of the Prophet” workshop may be used to achieve this goal.

That ministers be encouraged to involve themselves in the many opportunities for continued ministerial growth, development, enhancement and education. (Lee University, Patten University, International Bible College, or the Theological Seminary) Visit the Church of God website at www.churchofgod.org to find out more information

C. URBAN EVANGELISM/CHURCH PLANTING/REVIVAL

1. Plant new churches

- a. Plant new churches on districts and in towns where they presently do not exist.
- b. Support cell groups, small groups and home prayer groups to establish new churches.
- c. Survey membership for identification of those who have not received the baptism of the Holy Ghost.
 - e. Seek God for church wide new infillings of the Holy Ghost.
 - f. Make a new commitment to emphasize the initial evidence of speaking with tongues.
 - g. Challenge all believers to pray and fast, develop prayer cells, cottage prayer meetings, organize house churches that meet during the week, and small cell groups that meet during the week.
 - h. Support local church spring and fall revivals, as well as Family Revival Month.
 - i. Encourage attendance of all State Conventions and Prayer Conferences.

D. STATE MISSIONS EMPHASIS

That we utilize as our state missions program the “**Kingdom Builders 360**”, to replace the former Bridge Builders Partner Partnerships in Reaching Ministry.

That we have **Kingdom Builders 360 Rallies** during the months of October and November each year to promote and emphasize evangelism in the state of New Jersey. Each church is encouraged to bring a special offering to the **Kingdom Builders 360** service in their area, and encourage each church member to partner with us by pledging to pray, and give monthly to the Kingdom Builders 360 evangelism program. All funds raised in the Kingdom Builders 360 Ministry program will go to the state ministry of New Jersey. This ministry shall include:

Assist in New field Evangelism & Church Planting
Assist Churches and Pastors in need .
Assist in Local & Regional Meetings.
Assist in Outreach efforts
Assist in Ministry Training

E. SOUL WINNING EMPHASIS REVIVALS

That each church pray for revival and every effort be made to bring the church to a point of revival through relationships and friendship evangelism events.
That each church endeavor to have at least two revivals or special evangelistic weekend efforts per year.

That each pastor, in planning for revival, make a special effort to see that the evangelist's offerings are at least equal to the pastor's weekly salary, expense allotment, and housing.

The pastor or evangelist without at least a 30-day notice shall not cancel those revivals, except in an emergency. If a revival is canceled with less than a 30-day notice, a letter of explanation will be submitted to the scheduled speaker. Where possible, financial consideration should be given to the evangelist in the event of an emergency cancellation.

F. EVANGELISTS

1. That emphasis be placed on Evangelism at our State Convention.
2. That all Evangelist in the state be made aware of the National Seminar for Evangelist.

G. NATIONAL REVIVAL THRUST

That each church be encouraged to participate in the National Revival Thrust, beginning Palm Sunday and continuing through Pentecost Sunday.

That the church encourage members to participate in the Family revival in November of each year in order to bring our children and members of our extended families to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

H. SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY

1. That each local church develops a senior adult ministry using the resources of the International Department.
2. That each local church and each state develop a Prayerborne Division for retired ministers and senior adult laity according to the guidelines set up by the prayer commission.
3. That each state promotes and actively participates in the National Senior Adult Conventions and other senior adult activities.
4. That each state try to conduct a Senior Adult Retreat annually and that, where possible, it be scheduled at a time other than the national convention.

5. That each local church be encouraged to set aside the fourth Sunday in September as Senior Adult Day and that they make use of the materials available from the general department in promoting this day.

I NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES

That the Native American Ministries be presented to the people through the use of promotional materials available through the General Department. That each church endeavor to become a regular supporter of **SWIM** South West Indian Ministry.

J. CHILD EVANGELISM

That the programs of child evangelism – VBS, Kids’ Crusades, etc. be implemented using resources such as *Winning Kids to Christ*

K. CHURCH GROWTH EMPHASIS

Strengthening Small Churches; That we use all available material from the general department to strengthen our small churches.

L. Women in Ministry Conference

That every female minister in the state be informed of the Women in Ministry Conference sponsored by the Department of Evangelism and Home Missions.

M. New Member

That each church set a goal of membership increase of at least ten percent per year and that the month of May be designated as Membership Month for a united effort of membership growth across the Church of God.

N. Regional Senior Adult Retreat

That we encourage all Senior Adults to attend the Senior Adult Retreat, Smokey Mountain Jubilee in Gatlinburg TN.

O. Church Growth Research Center

That we take advantage of the new Church Growth Research Center located in the International Evangelism and Home Missions Department. This research will provide churches with materials for Church growth, including a 40 page demographic report of their area. Telephone 423-478-710, fax 423-478-7887.

P. Prison Ministry

That each local church be encouraged to begin a Prison and Jail Ministry wherever possible.

Q. New Christians

That each local church where possible provides new converts with *Your First Steps*, a comprehensive guide for new Christians. You may order these from USA Missions Department.

ARTICLE XI – MEN’S DISCIPLESHIP

That state leadership, district overseers and all local pastors and churches in New Jersey renew their commitment to the priesthood and servant-hood of all believers by seeing that the local congregation is led and directed by those whom the Holy Spirit has gifted and empowered for service.

1. That the State Overseer appoint biennially, an effective Lay Ministries Board which shall consist of not less than five laymen. They are to assist the Director of Men’s Discipleship in carrying out the state program for the laity. This board shall function as a service body to aid the state in the planning and promotion of lay ministries. This includes but is not limited to **(1) a Resurrection Breakfast, (2) annual Men’s Retreat** (Friday evening and Saturday), **(3 and “School of Prophets” Workshop** (Saturday).
2. That we establish a network for disaster relief within our state.
3. That a statewide conference on training the laity in Lifestyle Evangelism and Spiritual gifts be conducted.
4. The Men and Women of Action Ministry be officially organized on the state level, and each church be encouraged to organize the Men and Women of Action ministry at the local level in the Church of God in New Jersey. Further, that each church, pastor, and layperson give the highest priority to this ministry.
5. Each church be encouraged to send delegates to the Men and Women of Action Rally. And attend the Men and Women of Action rally on the designated date. For more information visit the Men and Women of Action web site at: www.cogwoa.org
6. **Lay Leadership Training** – That each pastor and church utilize the Lay Leadership Training program to train the laity in the local church for ministry.
7. **Men’s Discipleship Ministry** - That each church be encouraged to organize Men’s Discipleship Ministry in their local church. And that each church charter their Men’s Discipleship group with the International Headquarters in Cleveland, Tennessee.

That each church be encouraged to organize a special day each year for the Men’s Discipleship Ministry. All Men’s Discipleship’ materials and information may be obtained through the Department of Lay Ministries in Cleveland, Tennessee (423) 478-7826.

ARTICLE XII – CHURCH RELATED COLLEGES/ PENTECOSTAL SEMINARY

That we reaffirm our commitment to our church related colleges by praying regularly for the administration, faculty and students and by actively participating in their recruitment.

That each local pastor encourage alumni attending his local church to actively participate in state alumni activities.

That every pastor make his people aware of the “in home” educational opportunities offered by the Church of God Continuing Education program. Further, that every minister be encouraged to further his training by taking advantage of such opportunities as Lee, Patten, International Bible College, CIMS and School of Ministry.

Lee University: We shall continue to urge enrollment of students in Lee University. Further, that each pastor send a list of all high school graduates of his/her church to the President of Lee University.

Pentecostal Seminary: That we remember the Pentecostal Seminary in our prayers and encourage young men and women to attend the PTS, a seminary fully committed to the spiritual, doctrinal, and ministerial emphasis of the Church of God. And where and when possible, involve students, faculty, staff, and administration in state and local service and seminars.

ARTICLE XIII – BENEVOLENCE MINISTRY

That we remember the “fatherless and widows in their affliction” (James 1:27)

That we support the Home for Children

That we promote and participate in the special *Mother’s Day Offering* in May.

That we encourage support for our Benevolence Department ministries:

Smoky Mountain Children’s Home, New River Youth Ranch, and Heart for Florida Youth Ranch.

ARTICLE XIV – MASS COMMUNICATIONS

Publications

Promote Church of God Sunday School literature and Pathway Press Christian education and church helps and supplies. Promote personal and church subscriptions to the *Church of God Evangel*.

Media Ministries

Encourage churches, pastors and evangelists to take full advantage of radio, television and new emerging technology for communicating the gospel and promoting the work of Christ.

Encourage churches to support the Department of Media Ministries through sponsorship of *Forward in Faith* and *Oasis* radio programs.

Encourage all ministers to subscribe to the Ministers tape service by contributing \$5.00 or more with their monthly reports.

Map Ministry

That churches avail themselves of all advertising media, such as newspapers, highway signs, listings in yellow pages of telephone directories, hotel directories, etc.

That each church display suitable identifying and directional signs.

1. Map Ministry: Whereas some Church of God members are compelled to move from one locality to another for employment, and whereas in many instances commuting is impossible, whereas consistent and regular church attendance responsibility are imperative for a balanced and wholesome Christian character, maturity, and fruitfulness.

We recommend that members who move from one locality to another for employment be encouraged by the pastor of the church from which the member moves, to transfer his church membership to the church to which he has moved.

That when members relocate each pastor be encouraged to go to the Church of God web site www.churchofgod.org click directory, then click local churches, and assist the member relocating in finding a church of God close to the their new home..

ARTICLE XV – MUSIC MINISTRIES

That we utilize the **State Music Committee** in: 1) planning music for state meetings, 2) planning a music workshop in conjunction with “School of the Prophets” Workshop.

Encourage state personnel and local churches to promote and attend the **Music Explosions** each year to obtain training and new ideas.

Promote music-training efforts in conjunction with the Department of Music Ministries and the music licensure program.

ARTICLE XVI – CHAPLAINS COMMISSION

Appoint a State Military Affairs Coordinator.

Encourage pastors to keep members informed of opportunities for fellowship while on active duty with the armed forces (Church of God Servicemen’s Centers, Pentecostal fellowship groups and military contact churches, retreats in overseas areas).

ON GUARD is the Church of God magazine for the military. Each quarter it ministers to thousands of military personnel in many different countries. Both individual and bulk subscriptions can be obtained by writing ON GUARD, P.O. Box 3330, Cleveland, TN 37311.

Encourage churches to sponsor an annual Ministry to the Military Day.

Encourage local pastors to seek certification as community service chaplains in the local areas: local police and sheriff agencies, hospitals, prison/jails, mental health centers and nursing homes.

Encourage qualified pastor candidates interested in full-time chaplaincy placement in prisons.

ARTICLE XVII – CHURCH OF GOD BENEFITS BOARD, INC.

Encourage every pastor and eligible church employee to participate in the Minister's Retirement Plan.

Establish a state association of retired minister/widows.

Promote a double portion Reformation Sunday love offering for Aged Minister's Fund.

Encourage pastors to utilize the skills and resources of retired ministers for special ministries in the local church.

Recruit retired ministers to serve as interim pastors.

Provide training opportunities for local churches in the area of church administration, budgets, pastors, compensation plans, tax considerations, and so forth.

ARTICLE XVIII – SPIRITCARE MINISTRIES

That all local pastors and churches in New Jersey give full financial support to the **Reformation Sunday Offering (October** of each year) and that pastor and state leaders seek to identify, encourage and make use of the talents of retired ministers and their spouses through every means possible.

Organize or reaffirm a retired minister's in your state.

That we designate a qualified retired minister or board with whom the Spirit Care office may correlate.

Make provisions to secure an accurate and complete list of retired ministers and minister's widows in your state.

Explore with pastors the possibility of adopting a retired minister or widow who is certified to be in critical need as a Spirit Care project for their church.

Designate at least one special occasion during the year when retired ministers and minister's widows will be honored and affirmed by the state.

Agree to pray with and for the Life Care Commission for Retired Ministers and Widows and for **Spirit Care** as we seek, under God, to address the needs of our venerable retired ministers and widows.

ARTICLE XIX – CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRIES

Appoint a **State Director of Cross-Cultural Ministry** to serve as the liaison to the Department of Multi-Cultural Ministries.

Encourage pastors to develop a Cross-Cultural staff, thus enhancing their opportunity of reaching all cultures.

Pray for and participate in the Cross-Cultural Ministries.

Encourage ministers and laity who are sensitive to evangelizing the Black harvest to send contributions for evangelistic rallies and crusades to the **Department of Black Ministries**.

Promote and utilize the help and resources of the Department of Black Ministries in state programs and ministries.

ARTICLE XX – OFFICE OF HISPANIC MINISTRIES

Promote the evangelization and discipling of the **Hispanic population** throughout the state.

Recognize the three social levels among Hispanics and adapt your strategy accordingly: those born in the USA but who do not speak English; those who come to the USA as children and are bilingual and bicultural; and those new arrivals who require a monolingual church.

Take advantage of the Office of Hispanic Ministries as a resource center for the Spanish-speaking constituency within your state.

ARTICLE XXI. MINISTRY TO THE MILITARY

A. To support our Armed Forces.

That a **Coordinator for the Ministry to the Military** be appointed by the State Overseer.

That we give special attention and ministry to the military personnel around the World, both the active and retired. That we participate in the programs of The Ministry to the Military and inform the membership that are or have been connected to any branch of military of the annual convention “**RECALL**”.