

MINISTERIAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM SEMINAR I

**Theme: “The Mission and Ministry of the
Pentecostal Church”**

Commitments to the Core Values of the Church of God Mission and Vision

**Compiled by
Larry G. Hess**

INTRODUCTION

The Church of God in Cleveland, Tennessee, has strong international commitment to its Declaration of Faith (fourteen articles), to its Doctrinal Commitments (twenty-two items), and its Practical Commitments (seven commitments). The Church of God also has a clear statement of vision and mission with seven specific areas of commitment to the core values of our mission and vision.

This session is designed to explore these core value commitments in depth.

I. PRACTICAL COMMITMENTS

The Church of God is a holiness Pentecostal movement. There are many important doctrinal distinctives concerning our faith and teachings, which are emphasized within our Practical Commitments. These are essential to our core values of mission and vision. The Church of God was born out of a sincere search for personal holiness in heart and life that would produce unity in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Our Practical Commitments must be founded in the belief that holiness of life is God’s standard for His people. Therefore, the foundation of these Practical Commitments is laid upon the principles of Biblical holiness.

Church of God teachings and articles of faith are not just doctrines to believe, but they are a life to live in practical terms and realities. It has been said in various ways that a doctrine practiced is more significant than a doctrine proclaimed.

1. SPIRITUAL EXAMPLE

We will demonstrate our commitment to Christ through our practice of the spiritual disciplines; we will demonstrate our commitment to the body of Christ through our loyalty to God and commitment to His church; and we will demonstrate our commitment to the work of Christ through our being good stewards.

A. Practice of Spiritual Disciplines

Spiritual disciplines involve such practices as prayer, praise, worship, confession, fasting, meditation, and study. Through prayer we express our trust in Jehovah God, the giver of all good things and acknowledge our dependence on Him for our needs and for the needs of others (Matthew 6:5-15; Luke 11:1-13; James 5:13-18). Through both private and public worship we bless God, have communion with Him, and are provided daily with spiritual enrichment and growth in grace. Through periods of fasting we draw close to God, meditate on the passion of Christ, and discipline ourselves to submit to the control of the Holy Spirit in all areas of our life (Matthew 6:16-18; 9:14-17; Acts 14:23). Through confession of our sins to God we are assured of divine forgiveness (1 John 1:9-2:2). The sharing of our confession with other believers provides the opportunity to request prayer and to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2; James 5:16). Through meditation on and study of the Word of God we enhance our own spiritual growth and prepare ourselves to help guide and instruct others in Scriptural truths

(Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2; 2 Timothy 2:15, 23-26).

B. Loyalty to God and Commitment to the Church

The life of Christian discipleship calls for the fulfillment of our duties to the body of Christ. We are to unite regularly with other members of the church for the purpose of magnifying and praising God and hearing His Word (Matthew 18:20; John 4:23; Acts 2:42, 46, 47, 12:24; Hebrews 10:25). Sunday is the Christian day of worship. As the Lord's Day, it commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead (Matthew 28:1) and should be employed for worship, fellowship, Christian service, teaching, evangelism, and proclamation (Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5, 6; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Colossians 2:16, 17). We are to provide for the financial needs of the church by the giving of tithes (Malachi 3:10; Matthew 23:23) and offerings (1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 8:1-24, 9:1-15). It is our duty to respect and submit to those whom the Lord Jesus has placed over us in the church (1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13; Hebrews 13:7, 17). Our exercise of authority must be as a spiritual example rather than as a lord over God's flock (Matthew 20:25-28; 1 Peter 5:1-3). Furthermore, our submission must be a manifestation of the spiritual grace of humility (Ephesians 5:21; 1 Peter 5:5, 6). Finally, we are to avoid affiliation with oath-bound societies. Such societies may appear to have spiritual character, but by being oath bound and secretive, they contradict Christian spirituality (John 18:20; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18). Christians must not belong to any body or society that requires or practices an allegiance that supersedes or excludes their fellowship in Christ (Matthew

12:47-49; John 17:21-23).

C. Being Good Stewards

In the Scriptures, the virtues of thrift and simplicity are honored, but the vices of waste and ostentation are solemnly prohibited (Isaiah 55:2; Matthew 6:19-23). The living of a godly and sober life requires the wise and frugal use of our temporal blessings, including time, talent, and money. As good stewards we are to make the most of our time, whether for recreation or for work (Ephesians 5:16; Colossians 4:5). The idle use of leisure time degrades (2 Thessalonians 3:6-13; 1 Timothy 5:13), but the edifying use of it brings inner renewal. All our work and play should honor the name of God (1 Corinthians 10:31). As good stewards we must use fully our spiritual gifts (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, 27-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Peter 4:9-11) and natural talents (Matthew 25:14-30) for the glory of God. As good stewards we must recognize that the wise use of money is an essential part of the Christian's economy of life. God has committed temporal blessings to our trust (Matthew 7:11; James 1:17).

2. MORAL PURITY

We will engage in those activities which glorify God in our body and which avoid the fulfillment of the lust of the flesh. We will read, watch, and listen to those things which are of positive benefit to our spiritual well-being.

A. Glorifying God in Our Body

Our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and we are to glorify God in our body (Romans 12:1, 2; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20, 10:31). We are to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16). Examples of

fleshly behavior which do not glorify God are noted in several passages of Scripture (Romans 1:24; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:8). Sinful practices which are made prominent and condemned in these scriptures include homosexuality, adultery, worldly attitudes (such as hatred, envy, jealousy), corrupt communication (such as gossip, angry outbursts, filthy words), stealing, murder, drunkenness, and witchcraft. Witchcraft has to do with the practices of the occult, which are forbidden by God and lead to the worship of Satan.

B. Reading, Watching, and Listening

The literature we read, the programs we watch, and the music we listen to profoundly affect the way we feel, think, and behave. It is imperative, then, that the Christian read, watch, and listen to those things which inspire, instruct, and challenge to a higher plane of living. Therefore, literature, programs, and music which are worldly in context or pornographic in nature must be avoided. A Christian is not to attend (or watch on television) movies or theatrical performances of a demoralizing nature (Romans 13:14; Philippians 4:8).

C. Benefiting Spiritual Well-being

The use of leisure time in the life of a Christian should be characterized by those activities which edify both the individual and the body of Christ (Romans 6:13; 1 Corinthians 10:31, 32). We are to avoid places and practices which are of this world. Consequently, a Christian must not be a part of any other types of entertainment which appeal to the fleshly nature and/or bring discredit to the Christian testimony (2 Corinthians 6:17;

Thessalonians 5:21, 22; 1 John 2:15-17).

3. PERSONAL INTEGRITY

We will live in a manner that inspires trust and confidence, bearing the fruit of the Spirit, and seeking to manifest the character of Christ in all our behavior.

A. Trust and Confidence

A Christian should be trustworthy, dependable, and a person of his word (Matthew 5:37; 1 Peter 2:11, 12). Therefore, the swearing of oaths is contrary to a Christian's trustworthiness and should be avoided (Matthew 5:34-37; James 5:12). Christ, by precept and example, taught that we love our enemy and prefer our brother (Matthew 5:43-48; Romans 12:10; Philippians 2:3; 1 John 3:16). We should behave in a way that will point others to Christ (Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 11:1).

B. Fruit of the Spirit

If we live in the Spirit, we will manifest the fruit (attitudes and actions) of the Spirit and will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Galatians 5:16; 22-25; 1 John 1:7). Trustful relationships with others are a natural outgrowth of our positive relationships with the Lord (Psalm 1:1-3; Matthew 22:37-40). A lack of fruit-bearing in our lives will be judged (Matthew 7:16-20; Luke 13:6-9; John 15:1-8).

C. Character of Christ

Love for others is the hallmark of the Christ-life (John 13:34, 35; 15:9-13; 1 John 4:7-11). In His relationship with His Father, Jesus displayed submission (Luke 22:42; John 4:34; 5:30). In His relationship with others, He demonstrated acceptance (John 8:11), compassion (Matthew 9:36; Mark

6:34), and forgiveness (Matthew 9:2; Luke 5:20). We cannot bear the fruit of the Spirit and manifest the character of Christ without being spiritually joined to Christ (John 15:4, 5) and without having the seed of the Word planted in our heart (John 15:3; 1 Peter 1:22, 23).

4. FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY

We will give priority to fulfilling family responsibilities, to preserving the sanctity of marriage, and to maintaining divine order in the home.

A. Priority of the Family

The family is the basic unit of human relationship and as such is foundational to both society and the church (Genesis 2:18-24). The divine origin of the family, along with its foundational character, makes it imperative that we give priority to ministry to the family, both from a personal and corporate standpoint. The practice of Christian disciplines and virtues should begin in the home (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7). Therefore, our families should establish some pattern for family devotions and should endeavor to provide a Christian environment in the home (1 Timothy 3:3, 4; 5:8).

B. Sanctity of Marriage

Marriage is ordained of God and is a spiritual union in which a man and a woman are joined by God to live together as one (Genesis 2:24; Mark 10:7). Because of the divine character of marriage, it is a lifelong commitment with the only clear Biblical allowance for divorce being fornication (Matthew 5:32; 19:9). Sexual involvement either before marriage or with someone other than the marriage partner is strictly forbidden in

Scripture (Exodus 20:14; 1 Corinthians 6:15-18). Understanding the sanctity of marriage, partners should strive to maintain a happy, harmonious, and holy relationship. Should divorce occur, the church should be quick to provide love, understanding, and counsel to those involved. The remarriage of divorced persons should be undertaken only after a thorough understanding of and submission to the Scriptural instructions concerning this issue (Matthew 19:7-9; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 7:2, 10, 11). Should a Christian desire to remain single, this decision should be respected and should be seen as a viable Scriptural alternative (1 Corinthians 7:8, 32-34).

C. Divine Order in the Home

When God created man, He created them male and female (Genesis 1:27). He gave them distinctly different characteristics (1 Corinthians 11:14, 15; 1 Peter 3:7) as well as different responsibilities (Genesis 3:16-19; 1 Peter 3:1-7). In God's order the husband is head of the home (Ephesians 5:22-31; Colossians 3:18, 19), parents are to nurture and admonish their children (Ephesians 6:4, Colossians 3:21), and children are to obey and honor their parents (Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20). In order for harmony to exist in the home, God's order of responsibility must be observed.

5. BEHAVIORAL TEMPERANCE

We will practice temperance in behavior and will abstain from activities and attitudes which are offensive to our fellowman or which lead to addiction or enslavement.

A. Temperance

One of the cardinal Christian virtues is temperance or self-control (1 Corinthians 9:25; Titus 1:8, 2:2). It is listed as fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:23). We are admonished to practice moderation and balance in our behavior (Philippians 4:5). The Scripture indicates that it is within our prerogative to control our thinking (Philippians 4:8), our anger (Ephesians 4:26), and our communication (Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 3:8). To exercise self-discipline reflects the power of God in our life (1 Corinthians 9:27; 2 Peter 1:5-11).

B. Offensive Behavior

The Bible speaks clearly that we are to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others as a demonstration of our love for them (Matthew 22:39; Romans 12:9-21; 13:10; Philippians 2:3-5). At times it is necessary for us to control our behavior so as not to bring offense to others (Romans 14:13-21; 1 Corinthians 8:9-13). As we know Christ after the Spirit, we are also to know others in the same manner so we will not judge them after their outward behavior alone (2 Corinthians 5:16). A respect and tolerance for differences in others should characterize our relationships (Romans 14:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 8:8; Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13; 1 Timothy 4:1-5).

C. Addiction and Enslavement

One of the primary benefits of our liberty in Christ is freedom from the domination of negative forces (John 8:32, 36; Romans 6:14; 8:2). We are counseled not to put ourselves again under bondage (Galatians 5:1). Therefore, a Christian must totally abstain from all alcoholic beverages and other habit-forming and mood-altering chemical substances and refrain from the use of tobacco in any form, marijuana, and all other addictive substances and, further, must refrain from any activity (such as gambling or gluttony) which defiles the body as the temple of God or which dominates and enslaves the spirit that has been made free in Christ (Proverbs 20:1; 23:20-35; Isaiah 28:7; 1 Corinthians 3:17; 5:11; 6:10; 2 Corinthians 7:1; James 1:21).

6. MODEST APPEARANCE

We will demonstrate the Scriptural principle of modesty by appearing and dressing in a manner that will enhance our Christian testimony and will avoid pride, elaborateness, or sensuality.

A. Modesty

According to the Biblical idea, modesty is an inner spiritual grace that recoils from anything unseemly and impure, is chaste in thought and conduct, and is free of crudeness and indecency in dress and behavior (Ephesians 4:25, 29, 31; 5:1-8; 1 Timothy 2:9, 10). Therefore, modesty includes our appearance, dress, speech, and conduct and can be applied to all situations. The essential issue is, does our style of life please or displease God?

B. Appearance and Dress

Our life, character, and self-image are reflected by our apparel and mode of dress. The admonition of Scripture, “Be not conformed to this world,” reminds us that our manner of dress must be modest and decent (Romans 12:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:22, 23). It is not displeasing to God for us to dress well and be well groomed. However, above all we must seek spiritual beauty, which does not come from outward adornment with jewelry, expensive clothes, or cosmetics, but from good works, chaste conversation, and a meek and quiet spirit (Philippians 4:8; 1 Peter 3:3-5).

C. Pride, Elaborateness, Sensuality

As godly people we are to abstain from all lusts of the flesh and avoid dressing in a manner that encourages immoral thoughts, attitudes, and lifestyles (Galatians 5:13-21; 1 Peter 2:11; 2 Peter 1:4). Our beauty does not depend on elaborate, showy dress; extravagant, costly attire; or on the use of jewelry or cosmetics but on our relationship with Christ. **External adornment, whether clothing or jewelry, as an outward display of personal worth, is contrary to a spiritual attitude (James 2:1-4).**

7. SOCIAL OBLIGATION

It should be our objective to fulfill our obligations to society by being good citizens, by correcting social injustices, and by protecting the sanctity of life.

A. Being Good Citizens

As Christians we are members of the kingdom of God as well as a social order of this world. Obedience to God requires us to act in a responsible manner as citizens of our country (Mark 12:13-17; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17). Therefore, we should support civil law and order; hold

our leaders in respect and pray for them; participate in school, community, and governmental activities; exercise our voting rights; and speak out on clear-cut moral issues. God's law is supreme, but we are to obey the laws of our country insofar as they are not in conflict with obedience to God (Acts 5:29). When it becomes necessary to disagree with practices and requirements of government, we should do so out of a concern for the promotion of righteousness and not out of delight in discord and controversy.

B. Correcting Social Injustices

Love for others and the recognition of the equal worth of all people in the sight of God (Acts 10:34; 17:26) should compel us to take steps to improve the situation of those who are under-privileged, neglected, hungry, homeless, and victimized by prejudice, persecution, and oppression (Matthew 22:39; Romans 13:8-10; 1 John 3:17). In all of our dealings, we must be sensitive to human needs (Luke 10:30-37; James 1:17) and guard against racial and economic discrimination. Every person should have freedom to worship and participate in the life of the church regardless of race, color, sex, social class, or nationality.

C. Protecting the Sanctity of Life

God alone confers life (Genesis 1-31); therefore, we are responsible to God to care for our physical life and that of others. If the circumstances require, we must be prepared to risk our life in the service of our neighbor (John 15:13); but the general rule is that we must respect our physical life and employ every worthy means to maintain it. Since God alone confers life, God alone must decide when it is to be ended (Psalm 31:14, 15). Because a

human fetus is sacred and blessed of God, we believe we have the responsibility to protect the life of the unborn (Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:41). It is our firm conviction that abortion, and euthanasia of the aged, mentally incompetent, terminally ill, and otherwise handicapped, for reasons of personal convenience, social adjustment, or economic advantage, are morally wrong. Furthermore, we believe it is our Christian responsibility to care for the earth and its resources. In the beginning God gave man dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:26-30). This does not, however, give us license to pollute our natural environment or to waste the resources of the earth.

II. SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES FOR MINISTRY (PREAMBLE)

Begun in 1886, the Church of God has been signally blessed of God. The growth of the church is attributable to a number of factors. Some of the most significant are (1) obedience to the Word of God; (2) reliance upon the Holy Spirit; (3) faithfulness to our call; (4) evangelistic fervor; (5) openness to all people; (6) missionary outreach; (7) discipleship training; and (8) a deep desire to retain the roots of Pentecostal worship, prayer, revival, and holiness.

As with other religious organizations, we now face great and complex challenges. About us are undeniable signs that tough times lie ahead for any movement attempting to survive and grow with an attitude of business as usual. We must take an honest look at our challenges, and we must not complacently assume immunity to the difficulties faced by other larger, more traditional denominations, some of which are already in the embrace of noticeable decline.

We fully accept the uniqueness of our position as one of the leading Pentecostal

churches in the world. We see ourselves as a divine work of the Holy Spirit, a vital part of a spiritual movement called to help usher in revival and bring renewal to a spiritually hungry world. For all of us, this is an awesome and sobering responsibility.

STATEMENT OF VISION

Our vision arises from our understanding of what the sovereign God purposes to do for and through His church. The Great Commission remains our mandate from Christ.

The Church of God is to be

1. A movement committed to the authority of Holy Scripture for faith and directional.
2. A fellowship whose worship brings God's power into the life of the church and extends that power through the lives of believers into the marketplace of life.
3. A body that is directed by the Spirit, fully understanding that baptism in the Holy Spirit is both a personal blessing and an endowment of power for witness and service in fulfilling the Great Commission.
4. A people who hunger for God, experience the presence of God, and stand in awe of His holiness as He changes believers into conformity with Christ.
5. A New Testament church which focuses on the local congregation where the pastor nurtures and leads all members to exercise spiritual gifts in ministry.

6. A church that loves all people and stands opposed to any action or policy that discriminates against any group or individual because of race, color, or nationality.
7. A movement that evidences love and concern for the hurts and loneliness of the unsaved through aggressive evangelistic, **discipling**, and nurturing ministries.
8. A church that is Christ-centered, people-oriented, and need-sensitive in all its programs and ministries.
9. A movement that promotes policies and ministries which reflect an open, sincere effort to remain relevant to each generation.

STATEMENT OF MISSION

The mission of the Church of God is to perpetuate the full gospel of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19, 20), in the Spirit and power of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4, 6, 13-18), through specific attention to and emphasizes upon the centrality of God's Word, world evangelization, ministerial development, Christian discipleship, lay ministry, Biblical stewardship, church growth, church planting, family enrichment, and servant leadership.

III. COMMITMENTS TO OUR MISSION AND VISION

These items reflect our core values in regard to fulfilling our mission and vision.

1. PRAYER

We commit ourselves to making prayer the highest priority of the church demonstrated by:

- Every local church becoming a house of prayer for all nations.
- Emphasizing communication with God as the highest privilege and greatest responsibility of every member.
- Modeling by all church leadership of an active and effective prayer life.
- Uniting with other believers in corporate and intercessory prayer.

(Isaiah 56:7; Mark 11:17; Romans 8:26; 1 Corinthians 14:14, 15; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Timothy 2:1-4, 8; James 5:14, 15)

2. PENTECOSTAL WORSHIP

We commit ourselves to gather regularly as the local expression of the Body of Christ to participate in Pentecostal worship that exalts God, engages the heart, mind and soul, and challenges to deeper commitment and discipleship. This commitment will be demonstrated by:

- Assisting local churches in planning and preparing for meaningful, anointed worship.
- Equipping pastors and other worship leaders to lead authentically expressed, spiritually alive worship.
- Modeling varying styles and forms of worship that glorify God and encouraging outreach and service.
- Emphasizing the importance of Biblical stewardship and the centrality of God's Word as elements of worship.

(John 4:24; Psalm 29:2; Romans 12:1; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Isaiah 58; Matthew

25:31-46)

3. **WORLD EVANGELIZATION**

We commit ourselves to intentionally reaching the unconverted, baptizing them in water, and leading them to unite with the church. This commitment will be demonstrated by:

- Viewing all the nations of the world as our mission field.
- Encouraging our local churches to adopt and intercede for an **unreached** people group. Resource materials will be provided by the World Missions Department.
- Asking all national churches of the Church of God international to adopt and implement measurable steps to evangelize and disciple **unreached** people groups inside and outside of their own regions (Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 15:19-24; Revelation 5:9).
- Encouraging every local church to increase a minimum of 10% per year through conversion growth.
- Cultivating a genuine passion for the lost that will compel members to personally communicate the gospel of Jesus and demonstrate His love to those outside the faith.
- **Discipling** new believers and passing on our faith to the next generation.
- Practicing life-style evangelism.

(Matthew 9:37-38; Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-18; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:13-15)

4. **CHURCH PLANTING**

*We commit ourselves to identifying, training and **resourcing** God-called church planters and to intentionally planting new life-giving churches. This*

commitment will be demonstrated by:

- Focusing designated resources of the local church, state/regional offices, and the international offices for planting new churches.
- Starting the number of church plants equal to a minimum of 3% of the total number of churches in a state/region/nation annually.
- Developing a certified training program in our Evangelism and Home Missions Department and educational institutions for church planters and home missions.
- Emphasizing the health and viability of new church plants as well as the number of churches planted.
- Affirming the different models of church planting for different situations.
- Recognizing church planting as an apostolic ministry for our day.

(Matthew 16:18; John 4:35; Acts 2:47; 14:23; Ephesians 5:25-28)

5. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

We commit ourselves to identifying and developing individuals whom God has called and given leadership gifts and challenging them to become servant-leaders. We will demonstrate our commitment by:

- Creating an environment in which men and women with ministry gifts are developed to serve as servant-leaders.
- Equipping, empowering and releasing lay leaders to serve as ministry partners both inside and outside local church.
- Providing relevant resources and training opportunities for both clergy and laity.

- Encouraging pastors to lead through vision, to communicate the vision to the congregation and to organize the body and each of its ministry groups so the vision can be realized.

(Mark 3:13-15; 2 Timothy 2:2, 2:15, 3:14-17; Ephesians 4:11-13)

6. CARE

We commit ourselves to the challenge of being a church that genuinely cares for one another and for those who are lost, hurting and needy. We will demonstrate our commitment by:

- Building loving, caring relationships within families, between members, and within the communities we serve.
- Obeying the Care Commission of Christ in Matthew 25.
- Cultivating compassion and showing mercy to the unloved, the undesirable and the **unreached** of our society.
- Establishing in each local church some type of outreach ministry that demonstrates our genuine concern and love for the disadvantaged or oppressed.

(Psalms 86:15; Matthew 25; Luke 6:36; Acts 20:28)

7. INTERDEPENDENCE

We commit ourselves to the principle of interdependence, acknowledging our interconnectedness and dependence on all the members of the Body of Christ. We will demonstrate our commitment by:

- Reaching out to others in the Body of Christ for collaboration, resource sharing and learning opportunities.
- Encouraging local churches to build relationships with like-minded and like-hearted churches in their communities to work together to reach the lost.
- Involving clergy in the processes of mentoring, coaching and consulting on the local, state, regional, national and international levels to increase the level of trust and support among ministers.
- Engaging in dialogue and partnership with local, national and international organizations who seek to fulfill the Great Commission of Christ.

(Colossians 2:19; 1 Corinthians 12:14-31; Galatians. 6:1-6)

IV. COMMITMENT TO THE LOCAL CHURCH

A. Priority Statement: The Church of God recognizes the local church as the foundation of all ministry activities and will renew efforts to acknowledge, affirm, strengthen, and support the central importance of the ministry of the local church.

B. For Implementation We Recommend

1. More open proclamation of the joy and power of worship (Isaiah 6:1-4; Psalms 147:1; 149:1; 150:1-6; John 4:23, 24; 9:31; Revelation 11:16).
2. Prayerful search for clearer understanding of spiritual gifts and their operation in the church (1 Corinthians 12:1-11; 14:1-40; Romans 12:4-8).
3. Greater care in the appointment of pastors, with emphasis upon compatibility and interrelationships between congregation and leaders

(Titus 1:5-9; Ephesians 5:21; Hebrews 13:17, 18; Romans 12:14-21).

4. Strengthening the pastor in his role as spiritual shepherd with first responsibility for prayer and ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4; 2 Timothy 2:15).
5. More emphasis upon teaching pastors to train and involve lay men and women for effective ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 4:11-16; 5:17; 1 Peter 4:10, 11).
6. Development of a method for objective evaluation of local church ministries (2 Corinthians 3:1-3, 5; Colossians 1:9-20).

V. COMMITMENT TO LAITY

A. Priority Statement: The Church of God will further emphasize the doctrinal position of the priesthood of all believers and will encourage laity to assume a rightful Biblical role as full partners in ministry throughout every area of the church.

B. For Implementation We Recommend

1. Renewed and expanded efforts by all pastors to train, inspire, equip and release lay people for ministry in strategic areas of local church, and community service (Acts 6:1-7; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10).
2. Specific steps for defining and developing the ministry of deacons and elders (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:8-13; Titus 1:5-9).
3. Joint sessions between lay and ministerial leadership in establishing harvest goals and objectives for the Church of God.
4. Continued study as to the role of laity in the International General Assembly

of the Church of God.

VI. COMMITMENT TO CLERGY

A. Priority Statement: The Church of God believes that from within the priesthood of all believers God specifically selects, calls, anoints, and commissions certain individuals for extraordinary service and leadership and that this special (clergy) calling is of God's sovereign will, characterized by individuals with spiritual passion, love for the lost, total involvement, lifelong sacrifice, and servant leadership rather than by those seeking position or personal honor.

B. For Implementation We Recommend

1. More emphasis upon local church confirmation, affirmation, and endorsement of ministerial applicants prior to their seeking exhorter's license (Acts 13:1-4; 14:23).
2. Establishing more specific Scriptural and practical assessment and appraisal procedures for evaluating ministers of all ranks and in all positions on a continuing basis (Romans 12:2; 13:5; 2 Timothy 4:5).
3. Heightened emphasis upon continuing education for all ministers through formal institutions and special seminars, study programs, and conventions (2 Timothy 2:15).
4. Recognition of the vital role women presently give in Church of God ministry—their teaching, preaching, administrative and leadership skills—and renewed encouragement and support for their ministry, in keeping with that obvious emphasis found in the Gospels, throughout the Book of Acts, and in the Epistles (Acts 16:14, 15, 40, 18:26, 21:8, 9; Romans 16:1-7; Titus 2:3-5).

VII. COMMITMENT TO LEADERSHIP

A. Priority Statement: The Church of God believes leaders must exemplify the servant qualities of Jesus (Matthew 20:27, 28; Philippians 2:17), that they must conform to the highest moral and ethical standards (Titus 1:5-9), and that they must place the welfare of others before that of themselves (John 10:11; 1 Peter 5:2).

B. For Implementation We Recommend

1. That full honor, respect, and recognition be given to the Holy Spirit, who is Himself the true leader of the church (Acts 13:4; 15:28; 16:6, 7).
2. Greater attention to personal accountability and positional responsibility on the part of all leaders, with Scriptural emphasis upon caring (pastoral) relationships (1 Corinthians 12:25; Colossians 4:17; 1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 13:17).
3. More emphasis on the Scriptural qualifications for bishop (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9) and greater care in the leadership selection and appointment process.
4. More delegating of secondary matters (Acts 6:3) in order to keep the role of bishop in perspective (Acts 6:4).
5. More focus by the leadership in the utilization of ministry resources and skills of retired clergy at the local, district, state, and national levels (Romans 13:7).

VIII. COMMITMENT TO CONSECRATION

A. Priority Statement: The Church of God resolutely declares that its

accomplishments can never be truly reflected in numerical growth, physical accomplishments, or the adulation of men; but our true success as God's church is always measured in terms of our relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

B. For Implementation We Recommend

1. Renewal of our pledge to do whatever is necessary to be God's people on this earth (Ephesians 3:14-21).
2. Periodic calls throughout the church for solemn assemblies (Joel 2:15-17) which involve confession, repentance, dedication, and obedience to the voice of God (2 Chronicles 7:14; Romans 12:1; James 4:8-10).
3. Reaffirmation of our belief and daily practice of Biblical holiness and personal integrity (1 Corinthians 7:34; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Colossians 1:21, 22; 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8; 2 Timothy 1:9; Hebrews 12:14).
4. That our clergy and laity seek for vision and passion, both of which are born in and maintained by prayer (Joel 2:28; Acts 26:19; Romans 9:2, 3; 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8).
5. A renewed commitment to become more responsive to the voice of God to our society for justice, righteousness, and all other Scriptural principles rather than a mere echo of popular opinion (Luke 3:4; Acts 4:10-12; Ephesians 6:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:20; Micah 6:6-12; Amos 5:1-27).