

Church of God in Christ Manual (Info for Leaders to Know)

Dress Code:

Christians at all times and in all circumstances are bound to practice modesty in dress. This is because modesty is the badge of chastity.

- ✓ Dressing in sensually provocative manner produces inclinations to evil desires
- ✓ Scripture admonishes to dress in modest apparel. II Tim 2:9
- ✓ Public Swimming/Sunbathing are not occasions for abandoning modesty
- ✓ Parents should instruct their children from early years on the principles that govern modesty of dress
- ✓ Attendance at religious services call for neat and dignified clothing. We petition our members to make or purchase clothing they wear for going to church a sign of their reverence and their love for God. (1 Timothy 2:9-10; I Peter 3:3)
- ✓ The presiding bishop and the General Board of the church in cooperation with the Department of Women of the church offer to the women of our communion a "Dress Code". This code is presented in light of the word of God as recorded in 1 Tim 2:9-10, and 1 Peter 3:3, and is not designed to take away your desire to dress comely, but rather to suggest that you dress "as becometh holiness." If we are honest with ourselves, we will admit that "saints" are and will always be different. In days of yore, the holy people were known by their simplicity and natural beauty. How often we would hear the holiness preacher and mothers of the church remind us that God promised to "beautify the meek with salvation." In recent years we have come to the place that we hardly recognize the holiness church because of the trend of times in which we live. Styles have become more promiscuous and the Church of God in Christ is losing that silent witness and evidence of the "Difference between holy and unholy, and between clean and unclean." We trust that the call to holiness in every quarter of our church will be heeded by those who seek to fulfill the mission of the church and that we, too, can walk "by the same rule and mind the same things."

✓ **Alcoholic Beverages**

The Church of God in Christ believes in the total abstinence of alcoholic beverages for all of its members (Proverbs 20:1, Proverbs 23:29-32, Isaiah 5:11, 22, Romans 14:21, Ephesians 5:18, Titus 2:3) unless in cases of medical necessity) 1 Tim 5:23)

- 1 . Abstain totally from all use of intoxicating beverages
2. To urge and to constrain the alcoholic to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and accept his redemptive work. In doing so, we firmly believe that the power of Christ will take away the craving for strong drinks and restore one to health

3. To engage themselves in positive programs seeking solutions to alcoholic problems and rehabilitation for alcoholics.

✓ **Tobacco**

Smoking is seriously injurious to one's health and is a chief contributing cause to the deterioration of one's body. Therefore, we expect our ministers to deplore and abstain from the use of tobacco and be examples to all lay members based on the following passages:

1 Corinthians 3:16-17, Romans 6:19, II Corinthians 7:1, I Timothy 4:12, We recommend that our churches institute a program of education, for young people and adults, showing the hazards of smoking to the body and the soul (Psalms 9:17, Revelations 20:15)

✓ **The Drug Problem**

We condemn the unfounded claims that drugs can bring spiritual and philosophical insight to give one a better understanding of one's self. We deplore the illicit traffic in drugs and the self-administration of these dangerous drugs which can produce disabilities to the abuser and untold suffering to their families.

Anyone who feels the need of drugs, when no further physical condition indicates the continued use of drugs, should understand that one may have become psychologically dependent upon drugs; or that a deep seated emotional or spiritual crisis exists.

We remind our people when one is sick or in need of some form of remedial therapy to first call for the elders of the church (not drugs) and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. (James 5:14-15)

✓ **Crime, Capital Punishment and Rehabilitation**

The church admonishes all to walk always in the sight of God and be obedient to all just laws of the land.

We believe the extreme penalty of the law of man, providing our capital punishment, opposes all conceivable Christian principles and concepts. We believe life, and death are peculiarly and completely within the providence of God. Accordingly, the Church beseeches all to take those steps necessary to abolish capital punishment, in any and all of its cruel forms, from the laws of man.

✓ **Gambling**

We believe gambling feeds upon human weaknesses and contribute to the desire to get something for nothing. The attitude encourages faith in chance, damages character, breeds crime, promotes dishonesty, fraud and promotes apathetic attitudes toward petty gambling,

which aids organized crime in spreading legalized gambling throughout our communities and nation.

We therefore, support the repeal of all laws that legalize the use of: raffles, lotteries, bingo, card and dice games, slot machines, sweepstake tickets, buying a chance on an auto or trip to Europe; tossing coins, rings, or spinning wheels at carnivals, numbers, betting on athletic event, such as horse races, baseball, football, hockey and boxing personalities. It is expected of our churches to protest all forms of gambling and abstain from all games of chance for any purpose.

✓ **Mental Health**

We believe in and support the development and growth of individual and societal patterns that enable man to live in a comfortable state of emotional, behavioral and social harmony with himself and the society which he resides. We support those individuals and organizations that are so charged by society to preserve and maintain a state of social, psychological and emotional well being of the individual and the family.

✓ **Social Welfare**

Social welfare is concerned with the problems of poverty, unemployment, broken homes, family maladjustment, antisocial behavior, physical, mental, and emotional handicaps, racial tensions, limited recreational opportunities, inadequate housing and the need to provide public and private assistance to those unable to provide, for their families, a sufficient income. Serving people both naturally and spiritually is the role of the church (St Matthew 25: 43-46)

✓ **Sex in Christian Life**

We advocate marriage as being a natural and divine institution sanctioned by Christ. We believe that within marriage the sacred privilege of coitus rights is intimately involved with two major purposes of marriage, companionship and procreation. Any conjugal expressions outside of major are sinful and contrary to the purpose of God.

As Christians, our concern is not with the decline of absolutes and public morals, but the chastity or purity that Christ demands which is transcendent to public morality. Paul did not consume his time bemoaning the kindergarten level of morality of his time, but beckoned to all men to come to Christ and surrender to a life of purity. II Corinthians 6:17, I Cor 6:9-11.

We call upon our churches to support and lead out in programs of instruction that will include biological, psychological, social and biblical ramifications of sex and these programs of instruction should teach recreational activities, modesty of dress, attitudes, habits and sex values as to how they become transcendent in Christ

MINISTERIAL ORDERS:

Apostle means-one sent forth or out on a missionary errand; an envoy. A delegate or representative of the person who sent him. We can therefore conclude that those who hold the office of the Bishop in our church are equivalent to the New Testament Apostle in that both offices are administrative (I Tim 1:3; Titus 1:5, spiritual (Eph 4:11) and ethical II Tim 3:1-4) Paul was called to the work of an apostle that of a Bishop (1 Cor 9:1-2, Titus 1:5, I Tim 1:3).

Prophet- The word prophet occurs occasionally before the time of Samuel, as in Genesis 20:7 and Exodus 7:1. Other references include Ramah I Sam 19:20, Bethel, Jericho, and Gilgal (II Kings 2:3, 5, 4:38) The office of a prophet concerns itself with the following pertinent points for consideration: (1) The Nature of the Prophet. According to Exodus 7:1 and Deuteronomy 18:18, a prophet is simply the MOUTHPIECE of God. He receives God's messages and is compelled to transmit it to the people. He cannot, as God's prophet, bring a message of his OWN. He must communicate only what he receives from God. It is not left to his direction to formulate what shall be said. God determines this and he may not substitute another. (2) The Consciousness of the Prophets. The prophets of Israel knew they were called of the Lord at a certain moment, sometimes contrary to their own desire (Exodus 3:1, I Sam 3:1, Isa 6, Jer 1, Ezek 1-3). They were aware that the Lord had spoken to them and periodically knew he had put His words in their mouth (Num 23:5, Deut 18:18, Jer 1:9, 5:14). Their consciousness so impressed them that they could at times designate the time and place when and where the Lord spoke to them and times in which he did and did not speak to them (Isa 16:13, 14, Jer 3:6, 13:3, 26:1, 33:1, Ezek 3:16, 8:1, 12:8) Therefore, they distinguished between what the Lord revealed to them and what arose out of the depths of their own hearts (Num 16:28, 24:13, I Kings 12:33, Neh 6:8). The accused false prophets of speaking out of their own hearts without being sent of the Lord (Jer 14:14, 23:16, 26; 29:9, Ezek 13:2, 3, 6). When they addressed the people, they were compelled to speak only the word of the Lord (Jer 20:7-9, Ezek 3:4, Amos 3:8, Jonah 1:2). (3) The Prophetic Formulae. The prophetic formulae were indications of the fact that the prophets were conscious of bringing a message that was inspired by the Lord. They were ever mindful of the word of the Lord to Ezekiel: (Ezekiel 3:17). Such a formulae as the following testify to this: "Thus said the Lord" "Hear the word of the Lord", "Burden of the Word of the Lord", "The word that came...from the Lord." (4) Failure to understand their own message. This proves the message had to come from without and did not arise out of their own consciousness. In Daniel 12:8, 9, Daniel transmits a message entrusted to him but did not understand it. Zechariah saw several visions which contained messages for the people, but needed the help of an angel to interpret these for him (Zech 1:9, 2:3, 4:4) and Peter informs us that prophets often search into the details of their message regarding the sufferings and glory of Christ, in order that they might understand it more clearly (1 Peter 1:10, 11)

Evangelist: ordinarily translated "gospel" except that there it designates one who announces that gospel to others "a bringer of good tidings". Eph 4:11 teaches that all may possess the gift of an

evangelist in a measure, but some are specially endowed with it. He gave some.....It will be seen that as an order in the ministry, the evangelist precedes that of the pastor and teacher. The evangelist has no fixed place of residence.

As these are converted and united to Christ Jesus by faith, the work of the pastor and teacher begins, to instruct them further in the things of Christ and build them up in the faith. The evangelists accompanied and assisted the apostles, and were sometimes sent out by these on special missions. Their work was to preach and baptize, but also ordain elders (Titus 1:5, I Tim 5:22) and to exercise discipline (Titus 3:10). Their authority seems to have been more general somewhat superior to that of the regular ministers. Evangelists are mentioned in the bible in Acts 21:8, Eph 4:11, 2 Tim 4:5, Phillip, Mark, Timothy, and Titus belong to this class.

Pastors, Elders, Bishops

Pastor, literally means a helper or feeder of the sheep. Jer 2:8, 3:15, 10:21, 12:10, 17:16, 22:22, 23: 1-2 and Eph 4:11). The word refers now to the minister appointed over a congregation. The pastor was always an elder, but an elder is used to denote seniority (Luke 15:25; 1 Tim 5:2;) certain persons appointed to hold office in the Christian church, and to exercise spiritual oversight over the flock entrusted to them. Acts 14;23, 20:17.

Elders had the oversight of the flock entrusted to their care. Provide for it, govern it, and protect it as a very household of God.

An elder has the authority to preach, conduct worship services, administer the Ordinances of the Lord's Supper and Baptism, and to perform marriage ceremonies.

In the epistles, the church is found more organized Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:1-2, Titus 1-7, 1 Pet 2:25. Paul tells Timothy if a man desires the office of a bishop he desireth a good work. Must be blameless. Paul told Timothy to rebuke those that sin against an elder, receive not an accusation, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses. They that sin, reprove in the sight of all (1 Tim 4:19-20). This, of course refers to a formal trial by one in authority of persons inferior to him in rank.

Deacons

The term deacon denotes the service or ministrations of the bondservant or helper. Deacons are mentioned in the New Testament Phil 1:1, 1 Tim 3:8, 10, 12. A deacon shall have the authority to teach, to conduct worship services, to assist an elder in administering the Lord's Supper, providing this authority is given to him by the appointed pastor in charge.

Deaconess

An order exclusively for women in the church. Romans 16:1.

Teachers

The usual word for teach, in the New Testament signifies either to hold a discourse with others in order to instruct them or to deliver a didactic discourse. A teacher is one who performs the function or fills the office of instruction. Ability and fitness for the work are required (Romans 2:20, Heb 5:12) Teaching like preaching was an integral part of the work of an apostle (Mat 28:19, Mark 16:15, Eph 4:1) Religious teaching is necessary to the development of Christian character and the highest efficiency in service (1 Cor 12:4-11, 28-29, Eph 4:11-12). The qualification of the pastor is vitally connected with the teaching function of the church. He is to hold the truth (Titus 1:9), to apply the truth (Titus 1:9), to study the truth (1 Tim 4:13-15), to teach the truth (II Tim 2:2 I Tim 3:2), to live, the truth and be faithful in all things (II Tim 2:2, I Tim 4:16)