



THE BLUE BOOK

Principles and Practices

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Mission Statement

To be part of the Church Jesus is building.

To make disciples of all nations.

To be at least 1% of the population in towns or cities where we are located.

To operate the Kingdom principles, by demonstrating that Jesus is alive through our ministry and lifestyle.

Introduction

This book is about what we believe as a church, our aims and objectives, and how far we have managed to structure and organize ourselves to fully conform to the vision of a New Testament Church. It is about our guiding principles and practices.

As we walk with the Holy Spirit we trust Him to lead us in a progressive revelation. Each edition of the Blue Book will open the window on how far we've come.

It is my hope that every leader in the church will familiarize himself with the content of this book, so that we can all walk in steps, and be clear about what we do, why we do it, and how we go about doing it.

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Chapter 1

OUR VISION OF THE CHURCH

The New Testament knows only one Church. The only thing that divided that Church was geographical boundaries. It would appear that if an area could be adequately administered under a local or city council it formed the basis for a local church organization.

The church in Rome, Corinth, Ephesus and Smyrna, for example, were so named because they corresponded directly to a town or city. We have no warrant for carving up the body of Christ other than this New Testament pattern. The New Testament knows nothing of the 'church of' but of the 'church in'. Dividing the Church on the basis of doctrine or founder is evidently unscriptural.

The Biblical pattern is the local church, which is expected to relate to or be under the oversight of an apostle or apostolic team.

Ephesians 2:19-20 clearly points this out:

“So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone.”

It is this view of the local church that influences the way we name our centres in the New Covenant Church. Basically we prefer to use the name of the location to differentiate between our centres, rather than give them fancy names: such as House on the Hill or Abundant Life church. Though it is really immaterial what name is given to a church centre, nevertheless seeking to put as little a dividing wall as possible between our branches cannot be a bad thing. We cannot expect other churches to follow our practice, but at least we will try not to build any fences between our people, however small.

Apostles and prophets are vital parts of the foundation of the Church. To start a church without this foundation is to compound the problems we already have. Though we may have a statement of faith, aims and objectives, this is mere framework. It cannot and must not form the basis of the church. Yet the dilemma facing many sincere servants of God who want to serve God with a clear conscience, in an atmosphere of liberty, and under Biblical leadership, without domination, is in finding a spiritual home where there is true apostolic vision.

Bearing in mind that a local church comprises of all the congregations in a geographical boundary, what unity there would be when all churches are together under apostolic teams nation-wide? And these apostles are walking together as brothers, irrespective of the mandate each has received from the Lord. The whole church situation looks very messy and daunting at the moment, but there's no telling what can happen when the Holy Spirit gets to work. Something has to give, since Jesus will not come for a divided Church. When that happens the Church would have come of age, and the gates of hell would no longer prevail.

The Two Foundations

Unless we fully understand the fundamental issues at stake we may not appreciate the enormous task ahead of us as a church. Something went wrong centuries ago that only a massive act of the Holy Spirit could repair. Currently the Church is functioning on two foundations.

As we have seen the Church is built on the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself the cornerstone. I call that the Jerusalem foundation. It started in the Upper Room on the Day of Pentecost. Four hundred years later, during the reign of Emperor Constantine, a new foundation emerged. In his efforts to unite the Roman Empire and at the same time to steer away from worship of Caesar the newly converted Emperor constituted the Church of Rome.

We all know how that effort brought a lot of corruption and pagan practices into the church of Jesus Christ. Numerous efforts have been made ever since to relieve the Church of these burdens. From the protest by Martin Luther against the excesses of the Roman Church to the Baptists who revived baptism by immersion, the Church has been going through the Reformation process.

What the Church needs is not more reformation, a mere repair job on the wrong foundation. The need is restoration; a return to the original pattern and practices of the New Testament Church. This is our vision of the Church. We are not talking here of the vision of NCC, but a vision of what the New Testament Church is meant to be: a non-denominational church; a united church, not a unified church.

Mission Statement

Our aim is to build city churches around the world. These churches are to be at least 1% of the local population. This proportion will enable the church to be an influence for good and for change in the community.

- To bring every member into maturity in Christ.
- To foster deep and meaningful fellowship.
- To encourage and work for unity among all believers.
- To work for the good of the community.
- To play a positive role in the life of the nation.
- To provide opportunities for service.
- To be actively involved in missions at home and abroad.

Central to this vision of the church is the provision of an umbrella for people who have the call of God on their lives and who are willing to enter into relationship and partnership in ministry. We endeavor to create opportunities for these ministries to find expression and fulfillment.

Membership

Membership of the church is open to all born again Christians with the evidence of the new life being practically demonstrated.

Such members must:

Subscribe to the doctrine of the church.

Be easily identified through the units of the church (e.g., the house fellowship).

Endeavour to participate actively in all general and corporate fellowship meetings of the church.

Be available for service and support the church programmes regularly, morally and financially.

Chapter 2

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The Head of the Church is our Lord Jesus Christ.

The General Overseer

The overall administrative head of the NCC is the General Overseer. In joint leadership with him are the associate General Overseer, and the deputy General Overseers. As our global network of churches expands so will there be additional DGOs discovered and appointed into office.

The current General Overseer is the visioner and pioneer of the work, having received a blueprint of the church as far back as summer of 1966. Subsequent leadership structure will no longer be apexed by an individual. Leadership will now be multi-layered.

The scriptural basis for this development is found in 2Timothy 2:2, "What you have heard from me before many witnesses, commit to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also".

Here we see that Paul passes on his vision to Timothy. Subsequently, however, the leadership becomes plural. Timothy passes it on to "faithful men"; and not to "a faithful man". These faithful men in turn pass it on to "others also", in an ever increasing circle.

I see the same pattern in operation in the ministry of Christ. He called the twelve disciples to follow Him. He didn't call Peter, and then appointed the eleven to assist Peter. On the day of Pentecost Peter displays this multi-layered leadership by "standing with the eleven" as he addressed the crowd.

When Peter was addressing the issue of the inclusion of the Gentile believers, he started his statement by saying: "It seems good to us, and to the Holy Spirit".

Eventually the chairmanship of this group, i.e., the General Overseer, will be on a rotational basis, as chosen by the AGO and DGOs.

Of all our leadership positions, the role of the General Overseers is for life. This is because essentially it is not an administrative post. It is not even a job. The closest word I have to describe it is intercessory. It is a place of standing in the gap for the church.

It is when you become an overseer that you realize how much Satan hates the church and is bent on infiltrating and polluting it. I must confess that I find it almost a fulltime job just to keep watch over the church, and to keep it from being corrupted and deviated from the heavenly pattern. It seems to me that if Satan cannot stop the church growing in size he will try to make sure she does not qualify as the Bride of Christ. We mustn't let that happen.

No wonder Paul prayed; “I travail daily until Christ is formed in you”. There is no job description for a General Overseer. If the Holy Spirit does not enable the person, he will simply be a figurehead. Mind you he may exercise a power ministry, and draw the crowds, but without the Holy Spirit endorsement he will not move heaven on behalf of the church. It is not a position to aspire to. Fellow overseers will soon learn how to recognize the finger of God on an individual. The Holy Spirit is no respecter of age or rank.

The National Overseer

Over each country there will be a National Overseer. He is the administrative head of the national church, and directly responsible to the General Overseer.

Within each country there will be Conference Pastors. They will be directly responsible to the National Overseer, and with him form the Council of Conference Pastors.

The local church will be led by a pastor. He will be directly responsible to the Conference Pastor. He will have his council of elders, board of deacons or head of departments to do the work of the ministry.

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

We do not operate a pyramid structure of leadership where the pastor sits on top of the pile from where he rules and runs everything. Neither do we run an inverted pyramid structure, where the pastor is at the bottom of the pile carrying the load, while everybody just comes to church to enjoy what is laid on. Rather we endeavor to operate a circular leadership structure, which radiates outwards through delegated authority and shared responsibility.

In the middle of this circle there are the pastors and elders. They have responsibility for the spiritual health of the congregation, and make policy decisions. Deacons, who are sometimes called head of departments, have the duty of caring for the material needs of members, and look after the day-to-day running of the church.

We need only one ordained pastor, and a consecrated assistant pastor to head the church. The rest of the pastoral team are designated elders; except in a very large congregation where more ordained pastors are needed to carry out official duties.

Chapter 3

THE THREE MODES OF OPERATION

Operational Structure

The operational structure of the New Covenant Church rests on three pillars: Discipleship, Cell Group, and Celebration.

Discipleship

This is one to one follow-up of new converts. In the Great Commission our Lord commands us to “make disciples of all nations”. To realistically evangelize the world every believer must be equipped and empowered to win souls and bring them to maturity. In other words, it is the duty of each Christian to duplicate himself/herself in a new convert to Christ. With the training and material provided the converts can soon become disciples able to win others to Christ.

Cell Group

Members meet from house to house, or other convenient venues, just like in the early church, through the week for fellowship, prayers, evangelism and mutual support. Opportunities are given to develop leadership skills, and receive spiritual and material support through self-help.

The ideal situation is for the house fellowships to grow, multiply and feed the church with new converts. If done properly the house fellowship leader will carry out the bulk of the pastoral work, as he/she is closer to the people.

It is in the cell group that most of the midweek services can be carried out: bible study and prayer meeting, fellowship and breaking of bread, leaving the other general meetings like men/women’s meeting, youth work and worship team to use the central facility. To be truly effective the house fellowship must be given priority. It should not be crowded out by too much midweek activity.

Celebration

If done properly these cell groups will be the real functional church, or mini-churches, if you like. They form a homogenous group, where deeper and meaningful relationships are forged.

These groups are the ones that come together on Sunday to celebrate Jesus, be edified by the Word, and meet other groups. With this mode of operation the church can grow to any size in one location, because no one will be ‘lost’ in the crowd. Should the church building not be big enough to accommodate all the members, irrespective of multi-services, some of the house fellowship groups may decide to meet in homes on Sunday on a revolving basis.

CONFERENCE CENTRE CONCEPT

A church that has established itself, has planted other centres, and is financially viable can become a conference centre. It then becomes indigenous: that is self-governing, self-propagating, and self-financing.

A conference centre can pioneer churches in the same town or city or farther afield, nationally or globally. There are no geographical boundaries. The management style and strategy for expansion will reflect the ability and calling of the conference pastor and his team.

The only limitation is an operational one. The conference pastor can pioneer churches in any place on earth, as has been stated. However, his influence as conference pastor is limited to his country.

For example, a conference pastor in Nigeria can pioneer a church in Ghana or USA. Because the churches in Ghana and USA are outside his political jurisdiction, these churches can only form part of his family of churches. Only churches in his country can form part of his conference. He will maintain contact and administrative leadership over these foreign centres. However, these churches will still have to relate and be answerable to the local leadership structure.

Family Pastor

There is another aspect to this concept of family of churches. So far we have seen the family church in relation to a conference having churches outside their country boundary. A local/satellite pastor may also have a family of churches of his own. The joy of pioneering churches is not limited to the pastor of the conference centre.

The satellite pastor can pioneer churches under his conference. As they become numerous he may choose to forge a closer relationship with them and they with each other; all are still within the confine of his conference.

Indeed he may pioneer churches outside the country as well. However, whatever the achievement of the satellite pastor he is ultimately subject to the leadership of his conference pastor. A proliferate satellite pastor with many family churches in one nation can apply to be considered by the General Overseer for his work to become a conference in its own right.

While there is freedom for each pastor to pursue his God-given vision, there is corporate vision and accountability emanating from the Council of Conference Pastors (CCP).

Pastors with their members are free to apply to the General Overseer through the National Overseer for transfer to another conference of their choice. To do that the pastor must have the unanimous agreement of his elders and support of two thirds of his leaders and heads of department.

A conference may be wound down, and merged with another conference if it is deemed by the National Overseer to be ineffective or stagnant. Also a conference pastor who has not shown by his fruit and style of leadership that he is worthy of the trust placed on him may also be asked to stand down.

Deployment

As much as possible pastors and other church workers are left to get on with their ministry where they have been posted. However, the National Overseer and the General Overseer have the power to re-deploy them to another location or a different ministry. The Conference Pastor is also free to re-deploy associates in his conference. All transfers are carried out by mutual consent after prior consultation. These are not arbitrary postings, but could be to rescue a church elsewhere, or to a location where the individual can be more productive.

The pastor of a local church has the power to appoint his own council of elders, deacons or head of departments. As a general rule when a pastor leaves his post, either through transfer, or retirement, his entire team of elders should retire with him. This is to give the new pastor a free hand to appoint his own team, which may include some or all of the sitting pastoral team of elders.

In a well thought out change over, where a pastor is nearing retirement age, for example, he would have gradually introduced his successor into the leadership. By giving the new leader a free hand, all necessary changes at the top would have been made prior to his departure. This seamless transition is far healthier than a cliff edge scenario where the replacement pastor is forced into making drastic and abrupt changes.

There is absolutely no need for anyone to feel pushed out or redundant if the true structure of church leadership is understood.

Chapter 4

PASTORAL TEAM AND ELDERS

Why do we have a pastoral team of elders?

The obvious answer is to assist the pastor in carrying out the ministry of the church. There is, however, another reason for having people at the top. It is also a training ground. We expect an assistant pastor or elder to eventually head a new plant as the church expands. He in turn will appoint his own team, with a view to also sending them out. "Jesus called His disciples that they may be with Him, and that He may send them out".

By the time of transition most of the remaining team members will most likely be the choice of the new man. In other words, we will have a church where older pastors and elders would have long gone to head other centres that no one would be left to feel demoted or redundant.

Now, this solution opens up another problem. Some assistant pastors and elders don't feel comfortable being "sent out". Some may read meaning into that move by the pastor as a ploy to get rid of them. Others may genuinely feel unsuitable to the arduous task of becoming a church pioneer. They feel their place is with the home base where they are well respected and indeed may have become part of 'fabric' of the church.

This reluctance to step out in faith to start a new centre may be hiding a problem. The man may have been appointed on a wrong premise. Eldership is not only a responsible job it is also a stepping stone. Only suitable candidates should be chosen. People who can take the church forward and capable of heading a new centre.

You can relieve a man of his post, but you can't take away his ministry. This truth is what retirement exposes. If a pastor or elder has no ministry, only activity, after retirement he would be idle. A man's gifts will always make room for him. Being forced to take up the challenge of pioneering can quickly develop or resurrect a man's ministry that will remain with him for life.

There was a time when Joshua took over the reins of leadership in Israel, but Moses was still relevant. His rod was the powerhouse behind Joshua's sword.

Revolving Eldership

A dynamic church will always be having a revolving eldership. Fresh faces, new zeal, proactive programmes. During my time as a pastor not only did all my elders become satellite pastors, but practically all my house group leaders too. As seasoned leaders were moving out to pastures new, fresh ones were coming up to take their place.

It is the prerogative of the pastor to decide the term of office. Some posts are best suited and work better with an elected officer, such as Covenant Men/Women

Presidents and their executives, Youth leader etc. The decision to nominate who goes for election is the prerogative of the pastor and his team. It should be borne in mind election to some posts gives opportunity for fresh blood and ideas, and allows more people in church the opportunity to serve.

After the election of a new leader, other officers in the executive or team will also be open for election. These elections should be conducted in plenty of time before the end of the current term to give room for smooth handing over. All elected posts are for a three-year tenure, and open for re-elections.

Elections to office

As a general rule the election process is this:

People are nominated for election to specific posts.

The nominees will then indicate their willingness to stand.

They will there after give their manifesto.

Neither the pastor nor his wife should give any indication of a preferred nominee. That would be putting somebody in a post, and not a true reflection of the people's choice.

A person seeking election to office is asking for the opportunity to demonstrate the call of God on his life. Members also need to know what to expect of the nominee.

We want a person in ministry, however humble or mundane the role, who really wants to do the job, and is prepared to seek the face of the Lord for directions.

The call "Who shall I send and who will go for us" was a general call. Isaiah then answered that call. He didn't have to, and neither was he under any obligation to offer himself. He wanted passionately to follow the Lord into ministry.

All Jesus did was to appear to Saul on the Damascus Road, and warned him about his opposition to the church. No mention was made of call to ministry. It was Paul who volunteered to serve: "What will you have me do, Lord". Elections are a great chance to discover people who have been waiting in the wings for an opportunity to serve.

For the post of the national president (men, women, youth etc) members will nominate certain individuals, including the incumbent. This will be done by a secret ballot. The results will be revealed only to the Council of Conference Pastors. It is up to them to decide whom to appoint as president.

- a) They may decide to interview the nominees.
- b) They may decide to discard the results of the ballot, as the election exercise is only a guide, and not a mandate.
- c) They may choose anyone irrespective of their position in the ballot.
- d) They may decide to return the incumbent president, even if he/she did not score high points.

Points to consider in the decision making process:

- a) How the nomination process was conducted
- b) How the nominees and their supporters conducted themselves.
- c) Whether it was Spirit-led or evidence of politicking.
- d) If there was evidence of the influence of a king maker or lobbyists.
- e) The choice can only be made between the incumbent president and the nominees. The council cannot consider anyone not included in this group.

Elections to the executive posts should carry on as conducted presently.

Chapter 5

APPOINTMENTS AND TENURE OF OFFICE

The General Overseer

We now have an associate General Overseer, and two deputy General Overseers. Currently these DGOs are wearing many hats, which will need to be reduced in the coming years. They are local pastor, conference pastor and national overseer, as well as the new role of DGO.

As things stand the national overseer for UK is the new DGO for Europe and North America, while the national overseer for Nigeria is the new DGO for the rest of the world. The associate General Overseer is the retired National Overseer for Nigeria.

The National Overseer

The National Overseer is appointed by the General Overseer. His tenure of office is seven years, renewable until his 70th birthday. He should always be a conference pastor at the same time. It is this post that qualifies him to be a member of the Council of Conference Pastors, of which he is the chair.

After his tenure of office he should remain in his post as conference pastor, or if 70 retire gracefully.

He has the power to appoint national officers, namely: treasurer, secretary to the council or administrator, central office staff, and chairman of the central working committee. All appointments are for a seven-year tenure, and maybe renewed.

He should endorse all elected national presidents. All appointments must be in consultation with the General Overseer, who should also endorse all national appointees. All elected offices are for three years, and may be eligible for a second or more terms.

The election to the office of national youth president is the only post that is age sensitive. No one should stay in office beyond age 35. More importantly no former president or member of the national youth executive should play any role in the youth ministry. Nominations for the president and members of the executive should be presented to the Council of Conference Pastors through the NO. After due diligence the NO should come up with the names of eligible candidates for elections.

He should nominate the provost of the Bible College to the General Overseer. This post also has a seven year tenure, and renewable.

He should recommend to the General Overseer all eligible candidates for ordination.

Termination of an appointment after a seven-year period should not be seen as a sign of ineffectiveness. It is to make room for any emerging talent, or to give the incumbent the opportunity to explore other areas of ministry. The extension should never be seen as a right, but a privilege.

The Role of the National Overseer And his relationship with the General Overseer

He is the administrative head of the council of conference pastors; the national spiritual leader of the church.

He is directly responsible to the General Overseer in all areas of national policy and goals.

He is expected to play his part in fulfilling the global vision of the church as stated from time to time by the General Overseer.

He is to recommend to the General Overseer suitable candidates for promotion to higher office within the ranks of the pastorate. He is also to propose new appointees to the pastoral and ministerial offices.

He is to bring to the attention of the General Overseer any new policy or national programme.

He should consult the General Overseer before embarking on any major national capital projects or schemes.

He should present to the General Overseer a progress report, and a full annual financial report. He should present to the General Overseer a diary of major events.

Exceptions

There are occasions where we have to create an interim post of the National Overseer. One of the conditions for a national overseer is that he must be a conference pastor, and his duties include the chair of the council of conference pastors. In many countries where our work is not fully matured, all we have are individual centres, none of which have pioneered any satellite centres. Consequently there may be only one or no conference in these countries.

In such a situation the General Overseer will appoint a national co-ordinator to look after the developing nation. He will most likely be under the covering of a national overseer of another country, until such a time as the work is fully developed.

In a situation where we only have one or two centres in a number of countries, an international co-ordinator is appointed to look after and co-ordinate the work of these countries. Both posts carry the same relationship to the General Overseer as is expected of a National Overseer.

Conference Pastor

The Conference Pastor is appointed by the General Overseer with recommendation from the National Overseer for a seven year tenure. He will remain in his post as long as he is able to perform his duties successfully and show fruits in his life and ministry and relates well with his fellow leaders.

For the smooth running of the church the National Overseer has the power to move the Conference Pastor to another conference. This is again by mutual consent. Where there is dispute regarding the transfer, however, the matter could be referred to the General Overseer for arbitration. The General Overseer can transfer a conference pastor, and for that matter any pastor, after consultation with his National Overseer or co-ordinator to an international post.

His responsibilities are:

Expansion

Financial management

Training

Appointment of pastors

Keeping to the vision of the church

Support of all national and international projects.

Local Pastor

The local pastor (satellite pastor) is the man in charge of the local congregation. He is directly responsible to the conference pastor. All his official communications to the national and international offices should be through his conference pastor. However, that notwithstanding, every pastor is welcome to cultivate a personal relationship with the national and general overseers if he so wishes. There is no protocol limiting relationships.

He can stay with his church until retirement age, if he so wishes. However, under certain circumstances for the good of the church a pastor may be asked to relocate. All such things are done with mutual consent, as is our custom. Arbitration in cases of dispute should be referred to the National Overseer.

A pastor can choose to switch to another conference, either by himself or together with his entire congregation. To do that he must have the unanimous agreement of his elders and support of two thirds of his leaders and heads of department.

A pastor has the power to appoint his own team of associates, elders and deacons (head of departments). All such appointments must be endorsed by the conference pastor. All appointments are for a seven year-year tenure, and renewable.

A pastor, paid or unpaid, is an employee of the church. His conference pastor must provide a contract and terms of employment for him. This contract should

clearly spell out terms and condition of service, and where appropriate, pension provisions.

Since all ministers in the New Covenant Church retain their role as leader of a local church, whatever other posts they may hold in the church, each person in ministry will have this contract and terms of employment.

Length of Service

Every minister has a ministry for life. However, he has the option to retire between age 60 and 70.

While those beyond 70 may wish to continue in ministry they can no longer hold administrative posts. It is expected under normal circumstances that the minister in charge would have found, mentored and installed an associate minister ready to step into his shoes. A wise leader would have made plans to take less and less frontline roles in the church long before the retirement date beckons.

This scenario is more critical at the conference level. As a conference pastor nears 60, 63, he should have in place an associate he can begin to bring to the Council of Conference Pastors meetings to understudy him. This deputy conference pastor will gradually take more decisions on his own, so that when the time comes there would be some sort of continuity.

There is only one major fact to consider. Only the General Overseer can appoint a Conference Pastor. Therefore the person to be chosen as deputy conference pastor must have prior clearance from the General Overseer before he can be groomed for the job. It is prudent to clear with the General Overseer and the National Overseer first before informing the person concerned of his intentions.

In cases where the conference pastor fails to make proper arrangement for a successor the General Overseer or his representative may step in to appoint someone.

In cases where the pastor of a local church has failed to prepare and present his deputy, the conference pastor may go over his head to make an appointment. Under normal circumstances a pastor should choose a much younger person as successor. We must prevent at all cost a scenario where the vast majority of our top leaders are in their sixties. While the retiring pastor is free to fulfill his ministry, he should not play an official role unless invited. He should give the new pastor every opportunity to succeed and carry out his duties in his own style.

The challenge every pastor and leader must face is how to conduct himself when he is no longer the set man. The ministry may continue, because many in the congregation will still look up to him as their pastor. He must, however, leave the decision making and running of the church to his successor. He must not play the role of a godfather where he manages everything from the back. Even if the

successor is doing things differently the former pastor must remain loyal and supportive.

Once a stipendiary minister retires he can no longer receive his pay from the church. He must live off his pension fund. This is why it is important that every church make adequate provision for their pastor's and staff's pensions.

The elders and all other departmental posts in the church should terminate at 65, unless there are no mature and committed people at hand.

Chapter 6

ECCLESIASTIC GLOBALISATION

So far I have expressed the inner workings of the church from the viewpoint of the conference concept. This is the top down leadership structure from the national overseer, to the conference pastor, and then the local pastor. While this system has served us well in the past 30 years or so I believe the time is ripe for some minor updating and even additional systems to work in sync.

National boundaries and conference demarcations were designed to make for a smooth and effective administration of the church. In practice, however, they can lead to tribal loyalties and parochialism.

A perennial problem flagged up by this system is where we wish to plant a new centre in a town where a few of our members have relocated either for work or studies. Then the question arises: which conference will claim ownership of the centre, as the constituent families come from different conferences. We end up in paralysis, and unnecessary delays.

Another situation that is just as common is when a centre is planted in a town by a conference far away from its base. At the same time in the same town we have a conference that has a strong presence. And what do we find? The pastor in the minority doesn't feel he can join the other churches for training and support. Yet he is so far away from base that his conference pastor does not have the resources to give him any support or fellowship. So there is real danger that his work will wither or the pastor discouraged.

And these are just the tip of the iceberg in terms of operational hurdles youth and worship team leaders face when seeking to push the church forward as one.

A young person doesn't want to know which conference you belong to. They see themselves as NCC global. They live in a world without borders. So we need to offer an operational system that can address these issues, while at the same time maintain our present structure and see what we can learn from a new form of governance.

Chapter 7

NCGN

New Covenant Global Network

This is a new form of church structure. As the name implies there is no rigid local or national boundaries. It is truly global in outlook and operation. Consequently the leadership hierarchy is layered differently.

It is by no means an alternative or a parallel system. Rather it is complementary and can be interwoven into the existing structural fabric of the church. Indeed it is possible that the same pastor can operate both systems depending on the prevailing condition in the country he is working in.

A different approach to hierarchy

Unlike the conference system no leader is appointed. They are all elected into higher office, based entirely on merit, and on a rotational basis.

Every three years or so coordinators will be elected by the local pastors. Their choices will be based purely on the ability of the pastor to lead by example. To be eligible for election to the post of international coordinator, for example, a man must himself be a global player. To qualify as a national coordinator a man must have a tract record nationwide.

A different approach to finance

In the global network the ministry is looked at on a global basis. While the churches do not operate a joint account, they nevertheless have a common purse in a loose sense. We are not looking at 'my' work, but 'our' work; and its global in outlook.

The meeting point with all the systems we operate now and in the future are the DGOs. They are the ones to bring unity and order to the different systems pastors choose to adopt, as they are the ultimate head of all our global outreach.

A Different Approach to Expansion

There are two new developments under this category. Firstly we have the New Covenant Campus Fellowship (NCCF). Secondly we have identified and empowered a number of pastors as International Pastors.

Joined at the hip with the global network is the work of the campus fellowship. University campuses and higher institutions of learning are a great place to retain our young people and also to recruit their fellow students to the NCC family.

When our young people go away to university it is a make or break time for them as far as their loyalty to the church is concerned. On campus they are opened to

new opportunities. Within the three to four years spent studying they form new alliances, make new friends and prepare to leave home for pastures green in the field of employment. We must catch them and empower them at this crucial time in their lives, and turn them into ambassadors for the NCC wherever they end up in the world of work.

To create a dynamic and conducive environment for spiritual growth and usefulness we have linked NCCF with NCGN. Leaders of campus fellowships are trained and encouraged to be prepared for active ministry on graduation. They will actually be able to pioneer churches, perhaps with fellow graduates where their jobs bring them together.

The churches they pioneer will be youth friendly and operate almost on similar culture they are all familiar with on campus. These graduates can turn out to be our global ambassadors.

This is where the financial streamlining is crucially important. These church plants will never feel isolated or impoverished. Their leaders and ministers are inter-changeable. So a young pastor has access to the experience and vast resources of a more established centre: anywhere in the world.

Though we call them pastors, not all of them will have the calling or gift of a pastor. Some may actually be evangelists, while others are fantastic administrators. Because the churches are inter-related and global in operation there are no formal barriers to cooperation and shared responsibility.

Chapter 8

INTERNATIONAL PASTORS

This brings me to another new development: the international pastors. Rather than being an appointment to a post or position, these pastors are simply recognized and empowered for the work they already do. They are people who have a track record for opening churches at home and abroad. It is not because somebody sent them, or challenged them to go global. You might say it is in their DNA to go into all the world and plant churches. Some of them are not even being paid by the church. They are 'tent makers'.

By recognizing them, and bringing them together as a group, they can plan and grow together. They cooperate rather than compete with each other on the mission field.

Some of these pastors are already working under the conference system. Nevertheless I can envisage a time when they will branch out into yet another administrative system, while retaining part of their operations within the established conference system. I call it: The Streams

The Streams

Let me introduce the concept of the stream from the reference made in Paul's letter to the Corinthians. He made references to the situation in the Corinthian church that had led to some sort of division among the brethren.

1 Cor 1:12, "One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."

This episode gives us an insight into the inner workings of the early church. In addition to churches being grouped together under a geographical boundary, there would appear to be other groupings, even within the same city like Corinth. These were allegiances based on individual ministers. There were streams in the church, which flowed towards a meeting point to become a river. For example, the Church in Corinth would be like a river, where different streams flowed into it, thus making it a thriving city-wide church.

The point of the epistle was to eliminate divisions among the different streams. It wasn't to stem the flow. It was the way the church grew. Even the apostles in Jerusalem gave Paul the right hand of fellowship and released him to form his own stream. Galatians 2:7-9: "They recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised. For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles. James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised."

So here we clearly have two streams: one headed by Peter and the other by Paul. Not too long after this an incident occurred which caused Barnabas to split from Paul. Barnabas went away with John Mark, while Paul teamed up with Silas, and so another stream flowed out.

There was possibly another stream stemming from the ministry of Priscilla and Aquila who moved briefly with Paul, and who he left behind in Ephesus. In fact there may have been other streams for Paul to make it a mission policy to avoid building on other people's foundation.

Romans 15:17-20, "Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done – by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I *would not be building on someone else's foundation.*"

As these international pastors scan the world for opportunities to start churches they will pool their resources, both manpower and finances. The new plants will need to link arm on a massive global level, creating a compounding effect in financing and human resources.

As you can imagine not everywhere they plant churches will have a set man with the maturity and ability to lead a congregation. So working hand in hand with them will be the Flying Pastors. These are mobile pastors. They will travel from their home base to pastor churches elsewhere on a temporary basis. Their mandate will be to duplicate themselves in a fresh crop of leaders in the new churches. Then they would be re-deployed. These are people in secular work who make themselves available over the weekend. Some of them may be so blessed that they would willingly fund their own travel expenses.

Paul used Timothy and Titus in this capacity, sending them to stabilize churches where he himself could not stay for long.

Chapter 9

FINANCE AND SALARIES

For financial purposes each conference is autonomous. They are at liberty to raise and disburse their own support in line with the general ethos of the New Covenant Church. Similarly each local church is financially autonomous. It, too, can raise and disburse funds in line with the general ethos of the church.

The bulk of the money raised should remain with the local church. As a self-financing centre it should take responsibility for raising its own support.

However, on occasions when the capital project it is embarking upon is bigger than it can shoulder single-handedly, a local church can appeal for assistance from fellow churches within the same conference. Should the said load be too heavy for the conference to carry alone, it, too, can approach other conferences for help via the Council of Conference Pastors. No centre should take on unrealistic financial projects in the vain hope of being bailed out by everybody else.

It needs to be added that a centre that habitually pleads poverty when it comes to giving their dues cannot realistically expect to receive from the same pot.

Support for National Office

The Council of Conference Pastors should convene once a year to set an annual budget for the National Office. Then each conference should be allocated a percentage of this budget based on its financial strength. Each satellite within a conference will then be allocated a percentage of this national remittance, based on its financial strength.

The Council of Satellite Pastors (made up of all satellite pastors) should also convene once a year to set an annual budget for their Conference. As the vision of the church is the autonomy of the local church, care must be taken not to over-centralize the administration of the church at the national and conference levels. Therefore in some cases there may be no need to set a budget for the conference, as decisions to spend can be taken as needs arise. A conference that is well run should not be top heavy. It may not need to pay any salaries or allowances, as all in the conference are already drawing their stipend from their local churches. With modern means of communication there may be no need for paid clerical staff.

The 10% guideline

Generally speaking, a satellite centre should not pay more than 10% of its total income to national and conference combined. For example, if the national budget demands 7% of a satellite's annual income, then there is only a maximum of 3% of income left to support conference budget.

This 10% of income is only a guideline. In other words, this is the maximum obligatory remittance. No centre is under obligation to give more than 10% in total to the conference and national offices combined.

Freewill Offerings

In addition both the national and conference offices can solicit for help towards special projects and expenses that fall beyond the budgetary ceiling. This is where it is possible to see who really loves the brethren, and are willing to give when they are not under any obligation.

In the real sense of the word, paying your tithe is like debt repayment. Giving the offering is where sowing faith seeds enter, which carries the promises of a rich harvest.

We must not turn the conference system on its head. The conference centre is expected to play the role of a "father": a leader by example, and a provider. The more a conference pastor fails to be a leader and role model the less he has the moral right to remain as head.

The conference centre should be numerically and financially strong enough to single-handedly shoulder the ministerial and financial obligations of the conference. It is not right that a conference pastor leans so heavily on the satellites that he cannot survive without their subsidy.

Having your cake

The 10% cap has been a welcomed innovation, but there remain some pastors who still want to have their cake and eat it at the same time. They like the fact that nearly 90% of income is retained in their centre. Yet they still want to go cap in hand to the conference for capital injection into their building projects. The finances of the conferences are now cut to the bone.

There is a compromise: some or all the centres can elect to contribute to a common building fund administered by the conference pastor. However, the disbursement of such fund would be by joint decision, and should reflect the size of the contributions of each centre.

The council of elders

The Council of Elders of each local church should also convene once a year to set a budget from each department, and other fixed expenses, like salaries and rent or maintenance of properties.

All these financial and operational guidelines are there to ensure we have a well run, efficient, accountable and responsible church. It also brings a sense of ownership into our finances. Local churches will feel they are paying for certain national and conference expenses and projects, rather than just having a percentage of their income taken from them each month.

On the other hand, there should be a sense of responsibility from the national and conferences towards the local churches. They know that if they do not convince their satellites the need for a particular expenditure money may not be forth-coming. This would bring a spirit of mutual respect and co-operation. The local churches will themselves have to get their sister churches on board any request for funding, as these monies will be coming from churches that are aware of what they are paying for.

On occasions other funds may be raised for national and conference needs that were not anticipated in the annual budget. However, these funds can be raised in the churches as special offerings.

For example, lets say a conference wants to buy a plot of land or a building for its common use. It cannot raise funds for it by levying extra percentage contributions from the centres and calling it special project. When such projects are needed, which require extra funding from the centres, a special clearance from the National Overseer is required. No one should circumvent the 10% rule by calling regular expenses, like salaries, special projects.

Some centres are guilty of employing paid pastors over congregations that cannot afford them. Sometimes this is done in an effort to help a fellow minister who cannot find other employment.

Let me reiterate the meaning of an indigenous church. It is self governing, self propagating and self financing. If a church cannot pay its way it cannot afford a paid pastor. Besides, many small churches do not require a full-time worker. There's just not enough work to justify having one.

The exceptions are when a pastor is sent as a missionary to a place far from home, where he is unable to find work. Then the sending church will treat him as part of their salaried staff. He should be given some pay guideline, so that after a few years his work will develop enough to pay his expenses.

Minister's Salary

Since each local church is financially autonomous the decision to employ a full-time paid pastor is entirely in the hands of the local church eldership. The consent of the conference pastor will naturally be required. The salary should be decided by the elders of the local church. However, it should be done in consultation with the conference pastor, who will make sure it is in line with the accepted living wage structure of NCC.

When a paid pastor or church worker is transferred to another post his standard of living should not drop.

The National Overseer should receive his salary and allowances from his local church, since he remains a local pastor. His national office allowances and other expenses deemed fit by the General Overseer should come from the national office.

The General Overseer should receive his emoluments from his resident country. This could be from his local church, if he chose to remain a local pastor, and the national office. The level of remunerations should be the responsibility of the Council of Conference Pastors. Other national bodies may decide to give him stipends, based on their relationship and his level of participation in their national church life.

All other ministers and workers should have their salary determined by their employer, or local elders.

Minister's Pension

All ministers have the option to retire from official duties from age 60 to 70. By official duties we mean their position of authority and responsibility in the church. Their preaching, counseling and other ministries may continue as opportunities present themselves, and as they are led by the Holy Spirit. However, they will no longer be in a position to be signatories to accounts, or as departmental heads.

All local churches employing a full-time minister or church worker should make provisions for a pension plan for him. This is a contributory scheme where the minister pays a percentage of his salary into the scheme. The church also contributes a percentage.

For example, a minister can contribute between 10-20% of salary, while the church contributes between 5-7% of his salary to his pension scheme. If a minister decides to opt out of the scheme by not contributing to his pension, then the church is free of all obligations. His choice must be put in writing, and this document should be made known to his family. At retirement age such minister or church worker will have to fend for himself. He cannot continue to earn a living from the church because he had failed to make adequate provisions for his old age.

It goes without saying that a church must be in a strong financial position to cater adequately for his pastor before embarking on full-time employment.

The local church should join a reputable pension provider, who is able to show a projected pension pot in the future. This will inform the pastor or church worker how much to realistically contribute to his pension.

If the minister or church worker in question should wish to leave his employment before due date, he should be able to carry away his pension. Penalties for early redemption will depend on the company policy of the provider.

Alternative Arrangements

If a local church does not trust an external scheme, it should be free to look into making a private scheme of its own. It may decide it can do a better job in managing its own pension scheme. A whole conference may take this route, if it wishes.

A well thought out and secure pension scheme could encourage ministers and workers to remain loyal, long-term employees in a conference. Everyone wants a secure and stress-free future for themselves and their family.

The older a minister is before signing up to a pension scheme the higher the percentage of salary they should set aside. However, the contribution from the church cannot exceed 7% of salary. Any lapses by the employee will be matched by lapses from the employer.

The Payout

In my judgment the payout on reaching retirement age should be handled sensibly. The whole pension pot should be withdrawn from the scheme. Of that a lump sum of 25% of value should be handed over to the beneficiary. The rest should be re-invested in a fixed deposit. This sum will provide a regular income for life.

If an amount no greater than the fixed interest is regularly withdrawn, the fund can last in perpetuity. If an amount greater than the fixed interest is regularly withdrawn, it is possible the beneficiary may outlive it. At the onset of the scheme the minister or church worker should designate his next of kin, who could benefit from the estate.

Chapter 10

ORDINATION OF MINISTERS

The ordained minister has the authority to act on behalf of the church to perform certain duties. These are mainly weddings and funerals. Child dedication, water baptism and naming ceremony are open to all ministers and elders to officiate.

In an ideal situation an ordained minister is meant to represent what the church stands for. So care must be taken in putting people forward for this position. Apart from the moral and spiritual standard expected of all leaders in the church, a candidate for ordination needs to meet some standards in their marital status.

A person who is divorced and remarried cannot be ordained. This is in line with the biblical mandate that an elder must be the husband of one wife.

Where an ordained minister finds himself in a divorce situation, his circumstances need to be looked into carefully to determine culpability. In any case should he wish to remarry in the future, while his wife still lives, his position may become untenable.

Some cases are not straight forward and will require the wisdom of God to adjudicate.

Chapter 11

GENERAL CHURCH LIFE

Weddings shall be between a man and a woman who have a clear testimony of being born again Christians. Sufficient notice should be given to the leadership of the local church to allow for proper checks to be made. It is essential that the courting couple attend the marriage classes.

Holiness and decorum in matters of relationship and courtship should be followed.

We recognize people have different traditions relating to what constitute a wedding. For us two of three events make for a Biblical marriage ceremony.

- a) Civil wedding at the registry office. This part can also be conducted by our registered ministers as an integral part of the church ceremony.
- b) Sacred wedding in the church. This is when the couple is joined together in holy matrimony before the Lord. It could be a full-blown wedding ceremony with all the attendant pomp and circumstance. It could also be a private affair attended by only a few.
- c) Then we can have the traditional wedding, also known as the engagement in some quarters. This is for those who wish to celebrate in a cultural way the parental consent to the wedding.

(a) & (b) are the most important for us as a church. We cannot pronounce a couple as husband and wife unless they are married in the eyes of the law. Neither is it sufficient for a couple, who claim Jesus Christ is their Lord, to settle for a wedding in the eyes of the law but not before the Lord. We therefore do not consider c) as a marriage before the Lord. It is an engagement. Marriage must be both legal and God honouring. That is a good foundation for life.

Child Dedication

Child dedication shall be performed as part of the worship service. However, it can be performed at any time, and in a place of the parent's choosing. It is a short and simple prayer session, blessing the baby in the name of the Lord.

We are committing the baby to the Lord, until he is old enough to choose to follow Christ. By dedicating a baby we are giving him back to God and re-enforcing His covenant blessings on his life.

Dedicating a child to the Lord does not confer any grace or produce any spiritual change in the heart of the baby. It is up to the parents to lead him to Christ. There is no specific time to dedicate a baby, though the sooner the better.

Water Baptism

Water baptism shall be by full immersion in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is done for a person who has confessed Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

Water baptism stands for two things in a believer's life. It is an outward testimony to an inward reality. It is also a way by which a new convert can be totally delivered from the bondage and curses of the powers of darkness.

It is a type of deliverance Israel had from Egypt. After crossing the Red Sea they were truly and finally free from bondage. "The Egyptians you see today you shall see no more". So the pastor can anticipate divine manifestations on these occasions.

Breaking of Bread

The Early Church broke bread from house to house in fellowship and in remembrance of Christ's death. It is a symbol of the fellowship of believers and of our union with the risen Lord.

The bread and the wine (or grape juice) are emblems. We take them by faith as we commune with the living Christ. No changes take place in these emblems, and we derive no grace by taking them. If any acts of mercy take place during this time of sharing it comes directly from the living Lord in our midst. Not from the bread or wine. We can therefore safely say that no weight need be placed on the type of bread or wine. Any derivatives of wheat and grape will do.

However, care should be taken how we partake of the breaking of bread service. The symbolism is more meaningful if a small group of believers partake, as would be the case in a house fellowship. For it is all about unity and relationship.

For a group of people, such as in a large congregation, who have no meaningful relationship the symbolism is lost. The bread or bun should be of a size that can be consumed by all present.

What we are saying by breaking bread is this: the loaf represents the body of Christ, which was broken for us. Then all participating believers eat their portions. The imagery is that of the portions becoming a whole loaf in all of them.

An interpretation of the words of Jesus, "Do this in remembrance of Me", is remember me. In other words, put members of my body, which was broken, together again through this rite.

So a participant who is out of fellowship with another member of the group is not re-assembling the body of Christ. For him the symbol is mere ritual. And that was why 'some were weak, or sick,' etc, among the early believers. It is not partaking properly that can cause problems. This is a good time for reconciliation and forgiveness.

Individuals and couples and families can also break bread in the privacy of their home. In this regard it is the spiritual nourishment aspect of the rite that is in focus. Jesus said, "My flesh is food indeed, and my blood drink indeed." "He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood has life in him". The early church took this aspect of feeding on the Lord so seriously that they broke bread daily.

Funerals and Memorial Services

Christian wake keeping (service of songs) and funeral services can be conducted for members and their close relatives, irrespective of their profession of faith. The service is part of the church's ministry to the grieving member. Care must be taken, however, that no words or eulogies are addressed to the deceased.

In cases of unsaved relatives the church can only take the service if all forms of pagan rituals are excluded.

Some people like to hold a memorial service on the anniversary of the death. This special service can be conducted mid-week, or as part of Sunday service. Those who wish to extend the memorial beyond the first year will have to do so without the church being involved.

Chapter 12

TENETS OF FAITH

1. The divine inspiration and infallibility of the Holy Bible in all matters of faith and conduct (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21).
2. The Trinity of the Godhead and unity of the three Persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) therein (1 John 5:7).
3. One God and Father of all, who has revealed Himself fully to mankind through His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ (1 Tim 2:5).
4. The deity and Lordship of Jesus Christ as revealed in the whole of the Holy Scriptures (John 10:30).
5. The personality and deity of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17).
6. The utter depravity of the human nature and the guilt of all mankind since the Fall through the deceit of the devil, thereby rendering mankind subject to God's wrath and condemnation (Rom 3:23).
7. The substitutionary atonement for sin through the blood of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God (Heb, 9:14).
8. The full salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone by the means of which one is born again (Eph 2:8-9).
9. Water baptism by immersion at an age of accountability as an outward demonstration of an inner conviction (Matt 3:13-15).
10. The baptism of the Holy Spirit for the born again believer, denoting the endowment of power from on high for service, evidenced by speaking in tongues (Acts 1:5,8; 2:1-4).
11. The operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit subject to sound scriptural guidance (1 Cor 12:1-11).
12. The utmost free will of the believer in matters of choice at any age of the Christian life with its resultant consequences (Gal 6:7).
13. One holy universal Church which is the body of Christ, to which all believers belong (Rom 12:5).
14. Orderliness and comportment in public worship as motivated by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 14:32-33).
15. Christian perfection and holiness, through full surrender and consecration (1 Peter 1:15-16).
16. Ministry through the laying on of hands subject to sound scriptural guidance whereby opportunities are opened to believers to enjoy divine healing and health (Matt 16:18).
17. The holy communion (the Lord's supper, or breaking of bread) in obedience to our Lord's commandment (2 Cor 11:20-30).
18. Tithing and free-will offerings as God's financial plan for the Church (Mal 3:10-12).
19. Corporate and person to person evangelism as an expression of God's love for the world and in obedience to the Lord's commandment (Matt 28:19-20).
20. Modesty and chastity in all matters of Christian conduct (Col 3:17).
21. The resurrection of our literal bodies, the just and the unjust; when the unjust will receive final judgment (Rev 20:13-15).
22. The Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and the judgment seat where He will reward the saints (John 14:2-3; Rev 22:12).

Chapter 13

THE ROLE OF TRUSTEES

The role of church trustees is two-fold.

- a) They have legal obligations to fulfill.
These include holding the physical properties of the church in trust, approving and signing legal documents pertaining to land and building purchases, and making sure all church properties are used for the purpose for which they were purchased.

- b) They also have moral obligations to fulfill.
The major portion of these obligations is to make sure the church follows the principles and practices as laid down in the Blue Book. They should sound an alarm whenever they detect there may have been an infringement or deviation from standard practice.

They are in one sense our servants, by carrying out legal duties as required by the Charities Commission or other arm of government overseeing churches and charities. They are in another sense our masters. As custodians of the church's tenets of faith, principles and practices, and financial ethos, it is their duty to monitor all financial matters.

They can act as a collective conscience in areas pertaining to financial packages for ministers. It is hoped that the trustees, while being loyal and respectful at all times should nevertheless maintain an objective stance. All matters of concern should be reported to the General Overseer and copied to the Council of Conference Pastors, even if it is the General Overseer himself who is the subject of their concern.

Each national church can decide how often to rotate members of the trustees.

The trustees have the power to demand to see the accounts of any centre, conference or central office at any time. However, their findings can only be revealed to the General Overseer or his representatives.

Chapter 14

MINISTRIES AND DUTIES IN THE CHURCH

Ministering in the Holy Spirit

1. Preparation of the vessel
 - a) Keeping the vessel clean (from physical or moral sins) 1John 3:21.
 - b) Keep the heart believing the Word, Mk 2:23.
 - c) Cultivating the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

2. Knowing what you have
 - a) God conscious more than self conscious 1 John 4:4
 - b) Authority in Christ, Lk 10:17-19

3. Keeping Aglow in the Spirit
 - a) Speak in tongues as much as you can, 1Cor 14:41
 - b) Maintaining a positive attitude to life, Phil 4:13
 - c) Start each day with praise.

4. Ways to Minister
 - a) Prayer of the righteous man, James 5:16-18
Expect an answer when you pray, because in Christ you are righteous. Sometimes God can act beyond the level of our faith. People praying for Peter's release couldn't believe their eyes when he turned up.
 - b) Prayer of agreement, Mt 18:19
Let one person do the praying, and the others listen so as to be able to agree with everything being said.
So if two or more people are ministering to a person, one should pray while the others just agree (Amen), radiating their hands over the person or speaking softly in tongues. They can take turns to pray in this way.
 - c) Do what God says you can do
We are under authority, and as such we can expect miracles to happen at our command.
Mt 10:8
 - (i) Heal the sick
 - (ii) Raise the dead
 - (iii) Cleanse lepers
 - (iv) Cast out demons

Methods of Doing the Work of God

- a) Laying on of hands, Mk 16:15-18
When you lay hands on people expect something to happen, such as:
 - being 'slain in the Spirit'
 - swaying under the power of God
 - trembling or shaking
 - heat sensations
 - actual physical manifestation as in instant healing.

How to lay hands

Always lay hands lightly on forehead or hands, or part of the body in need (if appropriate).

You may ask the person to lay hand on a specific area while you lay hands on his head.

Never press hard on the head or hit any area.

Lay hands with confidence. Like Peter you are giving them what you have, so expect the power of the Holy Spirit to move through you.

You may open your eyes while praying, so that you can witness what is happening. Be alert. If the person starts to lean forward or backward be prepared to hold on to them gently on their way to the floor.

While laying hands, keep giving thanks to the Lord and praising Him quietly (under your breath) in anticipation. You may wish to speak in tongues or repeat the name of Jesus, but do all quietly and if possible silently.

b) Step of Faith

Encourage the person you are praying for to step out in faith. If he or she had any disability, ask him to do what he could not do before. Mt 12:9,13; Acts 3:1-7.

c) Speaking words of Faith

Mk 2:23

Speak directly to the situation:

To pain: 'Go, in Jesus Name'

To a spirit: 'I bind you in the name of Jesus'

Believe in your heart what you say, even if some doubts remain in your mind.

d) Commanding spirits (Mt 12:29)

First bind Satan, and thereby isolate the offending spirits.

Then cast them out.

Some pain and incurable diseases are caused by demonic activity. Once a person is delivered from these spirits, it may be necessary to ask for a divine touch to restore or repair the damage they caused.

The Example of Peter

Acts 3:3-7

a) He knew what he had

b) He was willing to give it away (said so)

c) He prepared the man to expect something

d) Command of faith (rise up and walk)

e) Laying on of hands (took him by the hand)

When you touch people in faith power goes out of you. Expect an immediate manifestation. Do everything in the name of Jesus, and always give Him credit.

Chapter 15

CONDUCTING WEDDINGS, FUNERALS, CHILD NAMING CEREMONY AND DEDICATION, AND WATER BAPTISM

The following procedures are guidelines.

Conducting public functions on behalf of the church, while having a certain framework, is best done in the way the minister feels comfortable. We are performing duties we trust will involve the presence and blessing of the Holy Spirit. That means we must be true to ourselves and act from the heart. So feel free to bring your own style and flavour to these occasions.

Weddings

Generally known as the Solemnization of Holy Matrimony.

There are two ways a church is involved in weddings: legal joining or church blessing.

a) Legal joining

NCC is registered with the government to join wedding couples. In this instance we conduct both the civil and the sacred ceremonies. In other words we act as the Registry Office as well as church blessing. Only certain ministers of the church are registered to conduct this type of wedding at designated centres.

b) Church blessing

Couples are required to get legally married at a Registry Office. They must bring a copy of their marriage certificate to the church leaders before a church blessing can be conducted.

No one can be married by the church, in whatever shape or form, without prior proof of a civil wedding. It is illegal to conduct any form of church blessing without this legal document. However, the document can be issued by any legitimate government in any part of the world. We must have a copy of it for our file.

c) What makes a Christian wedding

In the tradition of the majority of our church members, there are three facets to a Christian wedding. On average there are just two facets.

(i) Traditional Wedding

This is where parental consent and attendant ceremonies are involved.

(ii) Civil Wedding

This is the legal ceremony, at a Registry Office or as part of the church wedding where the officiating minister also acts as registrar.

(iii) Church Blessing

This is the most important facet of a wedding. This is where the couple are blessed before the Lord, and can start their lives' journey with God at the centre. After all, marriage is God's idea, not parents' or governments'.

Programme

Opening Prayer

Welcome

Bridal March

1st Hymn

The Charge

2nd Hymn

Solemnization

Message

Signing of Register (choruses or special songs)

Couple return to platform

Announcement

Closing Prayer

Recessional Hymn

Outside photos, and reception.

Renewal of Marriage Vows

Sometimes couples wish to renew their marriage vows. This may be to commemorate landmark dates, like the 25th anniversary of their wedding. But more often it may be because they were never properly married in church, or perhaps they were unhappy about being joined by an unsaved minister. Some may have lost their wedding ring and wish to bless the new one. Others may feel it is appropriate to renew their pledges after a period of lows or rifts which have now been repaired.

Funerals

This is the most unpleasant part of a pastor's duties, but one which needs to be conducted with sensitivity and professionalism.

It falls into three segments:

- a) Service of Songs (Otherwise known as the wake)
- b) Funeral church service
- c) Interment

Service of Songs

The Service of Songs is where well wishers can show their respect to the deceased, and commiserate with the family. There is room to give tributes, show love and support to the family, and derive comfort and strength from spiritual hymns and inspirational songs. It is a place for showing that even in grief we can still give glory to God.

Programme

Opening Prayer
 Praise and Worship
 Bible Reading
 1st Tribute
 2nd Tribute
 Hymn
 Bible Reading
 Tribute or short message
 Special Number
 Prayer for the family
 Hymn
 Announcement
 Closing Prayer

Funeral Service

Musical rendition
 Minister reads Scriptures at head of funeral procession as coffin is brought in
 Opening Prayer
 Worship
 Hymn
 Bible Reading
 Special number
 Tributes from family (optional)
 Prayer for the family
 Hymn
 Message
 Announcement
 Closing Prayer
 Hymn (as the coffin followed by family leaves the building)

Interment

Short service by the graveside:

Hymn

Bible reading: 1 Corinthians 15:20-57

John 11:25,26

Job 19:25-27

Hymn

Prayer

Coffin lowered into the grave

Final words by the minister:

For as much as it has pleased the Lord to take unto Himself the soul of our departed dear brother/sister: we therefore commit his body to the ground; in sure hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ; who, by the power that enables Him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body, according to the mighty working, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto Himself.

Invite members of the family to pay their last respects.

Say the Grace:

NB: Some people lay on a reception for guests afterwards, to give mourners a chance to show appreciation to well-wishers and friends.

Otherwise some leaders of the church can follow the family to the house to pray with them, and stay for 30 minutes or so.

Naming ceremony

In certain cultures a newborn baby is prayed for and given names at a special naming ceremony on the eighth day. I say 'certain cultures', because this practice is not universal among believers. So you may find some families see no need to name their children at a special ceremony or to have an outsider (namely a church minister) say a special prayer for their new baby.

There is therefore no special requirement relating to the conduct of these ceremonies.

We can only provide some guidelines.

Well-known songs

Opening Prayer

Testimonies

Read special Bible passage or Psalm for the child

Short exhortation (optional) 10 mins.

Hold the child

Call out the names of the child (not all the names, though)

Use one to pronounce blessings

Gently lay your right hand on the baby as you ask for God's blessing and protection

Closing Prayer

Child Dedication

This can take place up to six weeks after the birth of the child. It depends on the strength of the mother or the wishes of the parents. The idea behind dedicating a baby in church is to get the whole church family involved in blessing the child. The main thrust of our prayers is for the Lord to lay His hand on the baby, to guide the child in his formative years, to help the parents give Godly counsel and example to the child. Most importantly, that the Lord by His Spirit will move on the child so that as soon as possible he can surrender his life to Christ.

Steps

- a) Call parents to the platform
- b) Ask for paper with baby's name (just one)
- c) May ask if either parent has a short testimony
- d) Take baby
- e) Read a Psalm or short passage or text of Scripture
- f) Say prayers as directed in above guideline
- g) Hand baby back

Water Baptism

Procedure

Praise and worship for 10 minutes (if venue is conducive)

Short testimony of salvation from candidates

Short salvation message for the sake of unsaved friends and relatives.

Choruses while candidates and ministers go to change into attire suitable for baptism

Two ministers enter the pool

Someone calls each candidate to step forward

The candidate stands between the ministers at one end of the pool

The ministers stand facing each other, while the candidate stands between them facing the short end of the pool.

He then crosses his hands in front of his chest.

He holds his right wrist with the left hand, and at the same time pinches the nose with a finger and a thumb of the right hand

The supporting minister supports the back with one hand, and places the other hand on the crossed hands of the candidate

The main minister also supports the back with a hand, and places the other hand on the candidate's forehead.

The minister then says these words:

Calls his name, and then says,

“On the confession of your faith in our Lord Jesus Christ

I baptize you in the Name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit...in Jesus Name”.

Then both ministers lower the candidate into the water until fully immersed, and immediately lift him out of the water and back on his feet.

As each person comes out of the pool the congregation is led in a chorus of praise and testimonial songs until the next candidate is called out. Each baptism is followed by choruses and songs of praise. It is a joyous occasion.

When every candidate has changed into dry clothes the minister prays for all of them and blesses the people. It is possible that contacts for follow-up for salvation may have been made.

Always encourage candidates to invite friends and unsaved relatives to witness the occasion, and have gospel tracts ready.

Chapter 16

Solemnization of Holy Matrimony

Template

THE CHARGE

The minister shall say

We have come together in the presence of God, to witness the marriage of SAMUEL JOSEPH and MARY ADAMS
To ask His blessing on them, and to share in their joy.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was himself a guest at a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and through his Spirit he is with us now. The Scriptures teach us that marriage is a gift of God in creation and a means of his grace, a holy mystery in which man and woman become one flesh. It is God's purpose that, as husband and wife give themselves to each other in love throughout their lives, they shall be united in that love as Christ is united with his Church.

Marriage is given, that husband and wife may comfort and help each other, living faithfully together in need and in plenty, in sorrow and in joy. It is given, that with delight and tenderness they may know each other in love, and, through the joy of their bodily union, may strengthen the union of their hearts and lives. It is given, that they may have children and be blessed in caring for them and bringing them up in accordance with God's will, to his praise and glory.

In marriage husband and wife belong to each other, and they begin a new life together in the community. It is a way of life that all should honour, and it must not be undertaken carelessly, lightly, or selfishly, but reverently, responsibly, and after serious thought.

This is the way of life, created and hallowed by God, that Samuel Joseph and Mary Adams are now to begin. They will each give their consent to the other; they will join hands and exchange solemn vows, and in token of this they will give and receive a ring.

Therefore, on this their wedding day we pray for them, that, strengthened and guided by God, they may fulfill his purpose for the whole of their earthly life together.

Minister to the congregation

But first I am required to ask anyone present who knows a reason why these persons may not lawfully marry, to declare it now.

Minister to the couple

The vows you are about to take are to be made in the name of God, who is judge of all and who knows all the secrets of our hearts: therefore if either of you knows a reason why you may not lawfully marry, you must declare it now.

Minister to Samuel

Are you, Samuel, free lawfully to marry Mary?

He shall respond:

I declare that I know of no legal reason why I, Samuel
May not be joined in marriage to Mary

Minister to Mary

Are you, Mary, free lawfully to marry Samuel?

She shall respond:

I declare that I know of no legal reason why I, Mary
May not be joined together in marriage to Samuel

SOLEMNISATION

The minister shall say:

Samuel, will you take Mary to be your wife?

Will you love her, comfort her, honour and protect her, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

And he shall respond:

(I will)

The minister shall say:

Mary, will you take Samuel to be your husband?

Will you love him, comfort him, honour and protect him, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

And she will respond:

(I will)

The minister will then say to both set of parents:

Samuel and Mary have declared their intentions towards each other to become husband and wife.
Will you entrust your son and daughter to each other in this holy matrimony?

Both parents respond:

We will

Now the father of the bride will remove the veil.

Take the right hand of the bride and give it to the minister.

The groom shall repeat:

I, Samuel, take you, Mary, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward. I promise to love you in good times and bad, when life seems easy and when it seems hard, when our love is simple, and when it is an effort. I pledge to you my life as a loving husband. This is my solemn vow.

The bride shall repeat:

I, Mary, take you, Samuel, to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward. I promise to love you in good times and bad, when life seems easy and when it seems hard, when our love is simple, and when it is an effort. I pledge to you my life as a loving wife. This is my solemn vow.

The minister takes the rings from the best man.

(Some couples may choose to give only one ring: groom to bride)

He then prays:

Heavenly Father, by your blessing, let these rings be to Samuel and Mary a symbol of unending love and faithfulness, to remind them of the vow and covenant which they have made this day, in Jesus' name.

Amen.

The minister gives the ring to the bridegroom.
He puts it on 4th finger of her left hand

Then the bridegroom repeats:

I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God, Father Son and the Holy Spirit.

The minister gives the other ring to the bride.
She puts it on the 4th finger of his left hand.

Then the bride repeats:

I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God, Father Son and the Holy Spirit.

TO CONGREGATION

The minister says:

In the presence of God, and before this congregation, Samuel and Mary have given their consent and made their marriage vows to each other. They have declared their marriage by the joining of hands and the giving and receiving of a ring each.

I therefore proclaim that they are husband and wife.

THAT WHICH GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER, LET NOT MAN DIVIDE.

Renewal of Marriage Vows

Template

Husband to wife

Name: _____ (wife)

I believe in this marriage more strongly than ever. Today, I renew the promises I made to you () years ago.

I pledge my love and commitment to you.

I promise to love you, honour you, comfort and keep you.

I promise to love you in good times and in bad, when life seems easy and when it seems hard, when our love is simple, and when it is an effort.

I pledge to you my life as a loving husband.

You have been by my side as we created a family, a home, and a life together.

Today at the beginning of our _____ year as husband and wife, in the presence of God and these witnesses, I renew my vows to you, pledging my eternal love to you, and eagerly awaiting what our Lord Jesus may bring us.

I pledge to stand by you and love you all the days of our lives together in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

.....

Wife to Husband:

Name: _____ (husband)

I believe in this marriage more strongly than ever. Today, I renew the promises I made to you () years ago.

I pledge my love and commitment to you.

I promise to love you, honour you, comfort and keep you.

I promise to love you in good times and in bad, when life seems easy and when it seems hard, when our love is simple, and when it is an effort.

I pledge to you my life as a loving wife.

You have been by my side as we created a family, a home, and a life together.

Today at the beginning of our _____ year as husband and wife, in the presence of God and these witnesses, I renew my vows to you, pledging my eternal love to you, and eagerly awaiting what our Lord Jesus may bring us.

I pledge to stand by you and love you all the days of our lives together in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.