

Report of the Biblical Doctrine and Polity Committee to the 95th International General Assembly

The Role and Duties of the Assembly Committees

FINAL DOCUMENT

Over the last several years, it has become increasingly apparent that the roles and duties of the three primary Assembly Committees (Administrative, Biblical Doctrine and Polity, Finance and Stewardship) needed to be better defined and articulated to avoid occasional confusion or overlapping of functions. These three Committees are referred to as “Standing Committees” because the nature and influence of their work is ongoing even when Assemblies are not in session. These Committees require enormous time, effort, and cooperation to carry out their assigned functions, as well as to provide the best possible ministry they can to this body. In an effort to help clarify the Church policy regarding these various Committees, the General Presbyters have expressed their support for the Assembly Committee for Biblical Doctrine and Polity to define both the role and duties of these three Assembly “Standing Committees” appointed by the General Overseer of the Church of God of Prophecy. We humbly submit these clarifications based upon research of past rulings concerning these Committees and the intent seen in their origin. We offer these observations and recommendations:

Definition of a Assembly “Standing Committee”

1. A Committee appointed at the Assembly by the General Overseer in consultation with the General Presbyters.
2. A Committee that functions on an on-going basis with meetings outside the Assembly.
3. A Committee that gives a report to the Assembly for their consideration and response.
4. A Committee that has a global scope or sphere of influence in this Church.

Administrative Committee

(1) Both the General Properties Committee and the Executive Committee served in much more limited roles with fewer duties. The Administrative Committee (hereafter AC) was birthed out of a 1983 ruling that changed the name to the AC that assumed many of these roles.

(Cf. *83rd Assembly Minutes*, 1988, page 45.)

(2) With the reorganization of the General Overseer’s office in 1991, the General Overseer was given the authority to use his own discretion in appointment of International Office Committees and in the number of persons who would compose such Committees.

(Cf. *86th Assembly Minutes*, 1991, page 108.)

(3) The AC is appointed by the General Overseer. They will serve to bring items of an administrative

and practical nature needing General Assembly approval. They are to arrange for various personnel and International Office Committees who need to report to the Assembly.

(Cf. *88th Assembly Minutes*, 1994, pages 150—151.)

(4) It is not the responsibility of the AC to set the agenda of the other Assembly Committees [e.g. BDP and F&S], nor to dictate the agenda of the Assembly.

(Cf. *88th Assembly Minutes*, 1994, pages 43—44.)

(5) The AC of the International Offices serves to bring such items of administrative and practical nature to the General Assembly for its approval. The AC will bring to the Assembly for its consideration all other matters (not under the jurisdiction of the other Assembly Committees). Decisions are reached through overwhelming consensus.

(Cf. *90th Assembly Minutes*, 1998, pages 89, 150.)

(6) Input from the General Presbyters will add a significant leadership dimension to the process of deciding matters that will be presented to future General Assemblies. The role of the AC will remain essentially one of reporting decisions taken between Assemblies and of clarifying existing working practices.

(Cf. *94th Assembly Minutes*, 2006, Ministerial Policy Manual, page 320.)

(7) During the transition between General Overseers, by mutual consent of the incoming General Overseer and his predecessor, arrangements for proper office accommodations and remuneration is to be made by the AC.

(Cf. *94th Assembly Minutes*, 2006, Ministry Policy Manual, page 405.)

The transitional growth of the administrative needs has by necessity required the Administrative Committee under the direction of the General Overseer to take on more responsibilities. Prior to the introduction of the plurality system that resulted in the offices of the General Presbyters, there was need for this group to be the primary administrative assistants. With the transformation of plurality, the role of the AC was less inclusive. It is clear that the role of this Committee by necessity has grown out of need to assist the General Overseer and General Presbyters who represent the Assembly when it is not in session. With this understanding, some flexibility must be given the AC to rightly serve in its role, while also respecting the roles and duties of the General Presbyters and other Assembly mandated Committees. From time to time, it may be advisable for this Committee to meet with the General Presbyters or other Assembly Committees to review the AC's responsibilities and to assure the Assembly that all the Committees will work harmoniously for the edifying of the Church.

Biblical Doctrine and Polity Committee

The Assembly Committee for Biblical Doctrine and Polity (hereafter BDP):

(1) The Committee is appointed by the General Overseer to serve the Church by preparing an exposition for dialogue on universal matters of biblical doctrine, theology, ethics, and polity for General Assembly consideration.

(2) The Committee should reflect the international constituency of the Church (as much as possible). As a Standing Committee, it should interact with the international Church in the process of report development.

(3) The Committee is to prepare a preliminary expositional report that should be distributed to the Church no later than 90 days prior to the ensuing Assembly for their consideration. Additional expositional matters not included in the report should not be considered in that Assembly, but in the following Assembly after a document is introduced and distributed; however, urgent matters may appear. This does not preclude any dynamic move of the Spirit to give direction.

(4) Matters of biblical doctrine, theology, ethics, and polity for Assembly consideration should be directed to the BDP Committee. The General Moderator (General Overseer), in consultation with the

Assembly Counselors (General Presbyters) and the BDP Committee, may introduce matters of an emergency nature not included in the Assembly report.

(Cf. *88th Assembly Minutes*, 1994, pages 150—151.)

(5) In the interest of maintaining clarity and efficiency, it would seem wise for matters requiring biblical exposition to be solely dealt with by the BDP Committee.

(Cf. *90th Assembly Minutes*, 1998, page 89.)

(6) In order to give further clarification to our decision-making process, we recommend that reports concerning policies, procedures, and finances presented by Assembly Standing Committees be accepted by overwhelming consensus. All matters of a doctrinal nature must be accepted by “one accord.”

(Cf. *93rd Assembly Minutes*, 2004, page 333.)

(7) The intent of the expositional process is to provide each Assembly with a report(s) for decision and distribution to facilitate study, prayer, and meditation until the next Assembly, when it would be presented for decision.

(Cf. *93rd Assembly Minutes*, 2004, page 111.)

(8) The BDP Committee has been requested by the General Presbyters to make a clarifying statement concerning our position on Church government. We recognize the delicate balance between our theological/ecclesiastical make-up of the Church and the business structure that we must maintain for legal purposes.

(Cf. *94th Assembly Minutes*, 2006, pages 176-177.)

In light of the above decisions regarding the role and duties of the Assembly Committee for Biblical Doctrine and Polity, this body is to serve the Church by continually revisiting the Word of God to assure that we are walking in the light of truth. Henceforth, we further recommend that the BDP Committee should not only bring matters to the Assembly for their consideration, but also meet with the leadership and other Committees as deemed necessary by the General Overseer and General Presbyters to provide counsel in areas of doctrine and polity. We further recommend they should assist in the editing of the *Assembly Minutes and Ministry Policy Manual* to insure that decisions made by the Assembly pertaining to doctrine and polities are accurately recorded. Pertaining to what matters may be referred to the BDP, it has been the practice of this body that subjects brought for study or resolution to this Committee would come through the General Overseer, and General Presbyters, by an Assembly official decision, or because a matter has overwhelming importance and concern to the global Church.

Finance and Stewardship Committee

The Assembly Committee for Finance and Stewardship (hereafter F&S):

(1) The F&S Committee is appointed by the General Overseer to serve the Church by formulating and articulating biblically—based and globally—oriented financial plans and stewardship principles for General Assembly consideration.

(2) The F&S Committee should reflect the international constituency of the Church (as much as possible). As a Standing Committee, it should interact with the international Church in the process of report development.

(3) The F&S Committee is to prepare a preliminary report that should be distributed to the Church no later than 90 days prior to the ensuing Assembly for their consideration. Any biblically—based recommendation should be accompanied by scriptural references; any practical stewardship matters should include appropriate rationale. Additional matters not included in the report should not be considered in that Assembly; however, urgent matters may appear. This does not preclude any dynamic move of the Spirit to give direction.

(4) Matters related to F&S for Assembly consideration should be directed to the Committee. The General Moderator, in consultation with the Assembly Counselors and the Committee, may introduce matters of an emergent nature not included on the Assembly report.

(5) The General Overseer or General Assembly may utilize this Committee to assist in providing accountability and policy formulation in financial administrative processes.

(Cf. *88th Assembly Minutes*, 1994 pages 149—151.)

(6) The F&S Committee to focus on practical matters, including promotional and fund-raising projects. Thus, when determining the Assembly's expression, the one-accord principle will be used for the BDP on doctrinal matters, while the overwhelming consensus will determine all other matters and those presented by the F&S and the AC.

(7) It is the responsibility of the F&S Committee to review and establish the salary and benefits of all International Office Appointees and to develop an investment policy for the International Office funds.

(Cf. *87th Assembly Minutes*, 1992, page 62.)

Having reviewed all prior duties of this Committee, it is obvious that too much of the role of the Finance and Stewardship Committee was obscured during the transitional period of the last few years. We therefore recommend that all of the above stated duties of the F&S Committee be recognized so that they may serve this Church in providing better accountability of all Church finances. Furthermore, this would include the use of the F&S Committee to provide accountability in policy formulation in the financial administrative process and in setting salaries for the General Overseer and General Presbyters. It is the responsibility of the F&S Committee to review and establish the salary and benefits of all International Office Appointees and to develop an investment policy for the International Office funds. Their counsel to the AC is essential to provide broader insight and external review of all our financial decisions. We also recommend that their expenses to attend meetings be reimbursed or provided as other Assembly Standing Committees.

We humbly recommend the above report with special appreciation to all those who have served in the past and presently serve on our Assembly Committees. Their commitment to the mission of this Church and willingness to work without salary on their respective Committees is to be commended by this body.

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