

Constitution - Doctrine
and Church Polity
of the
United Zion Church, Inc.

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United Zion Church in 2003, 2004 and 2005

Preface

In the name of the Holy Trinity, we, the members of the United Zion Church, Inc., for the preservation of our faith, for the observance of the ordinances, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, for the more effectual proclamation of His Holy Word; in order to set forth the general principles of church government, to maintain unity and to preserve inviolate the common will of the membership of this church, do ordain this constitution.

All scripture verses printed herein follow the text conformable to that of the Holy Bible known as the King James' version.

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Introduction

The United Zion Church had its beginnings in 1855 when Mathias Brinser was excommunicated from the River Brethren church because he built a "church house" for public worship.

Mathias Brinser continued preaching and holding meetings as before. His followers were locally known as "Brinserites" but properly named United Zion's Children. The name was later changed to the United Zion Church.

We draw our greater heritage from the Anabaptist movement of the Reformation. Along with the law of love as taught by our Savior, Jesus Christ, the United Zion Church holds the following doctrines important to faith and practice.

These writings are not to be considered complete theological discussions on the doctrines, but rather a summary statement of the position held by the United Zion Church.

DIVISION ONE

Constitution

ARTICLE 1

Name

The Church shall be called the *United Zion Church Incorporated*.

ARTICLE 2

OBJECT

The Object of the Church is to worship Almighty God, teach His word and lead sinners to repentance.

ARTICLE 3

CLASSIFICATION OF MEMBERSHIP

The membership shall consist of a Bishop, ordained and licensed ministers, deacons, missionaries and lay members.

ARTICLE 4

CONFESSION OF FAITH

We believe in God the Father, who is eternal, self-existing, all powerful, all knowing, and ever present; and in Jesus Christ his Son, our Lord and Savior who is totally God, and in his incarnation became totally man, and suffered and died for the sins of the human family; and in the Holy Ghost, who is equal in being with the Father and the Son. These three constitute the one Triune God, who created the heaven and the earth and all that is in them, visible and invisible, and who sustains, governs, protects and supports the same.

We believe that the Holy Bible, the Old and New Testament, is the Word of God, and in its original manuscripts was without error. We believe that the fall of man in Adam, and the redemption of man through Christ, are plainly taught therein. We believe that faith in Jesus Christ as Savior is the only way we may become, and remain Christians and that forgiveness of sins, and obedience to Christ and his Commandments are a result of the new life in Christ.

We believe in a Holy Church, the Communion of the Saints, the resurrection of the body, the second coming of Christ, and life everlasting. We believe that the ordinances, namely: baptism, washing the Saints' feet, and the communion are commanded in Scripture and should be practiced by all Christian believers.

We believe that the Scriptures teach that Christians should not be conformed to this world, but that they are a separate people, and that it teaches the doctrine of non-resistance in a qualified sense: yet it is his duty to be strictly loyal to the government under which he lives, in all things that do not conflict with, or are not forbidden by the Word.

ARTICLE 5 CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The ultimate authority of the Church in polity and doctrine shall be vested in a General Conference composed of a representation of the various congregations.

The basic unit of local government shall be the congregational council with self-governing privileges in harmony with the authority of General Conference.

ARTICLE 6 AMENDMENTS

Section 1.

The articles of Faith and Doctrine of the United Zion Church Incorporated can be amended only by a two-thirds vote of General Conference.

Section 2.

The By-Laws and Rituals of the United Zion Church Incorporated can be amended, repealed or revised only by a two-thirds vote of General Conference.

ARTICLE 7 AUTHORITY FOR LEGAL ACTION

In civil or legal affairs, the General Conference, or when the time element requires, the Board of Administration shall commission, authorize and empower individuals, committees or trustees to purchase, sell, or transfer church property, real estate or securities, unless said property is separately chartered and shall therewith produce proper title in behalf of the church as a whole. Also, in legal matters the above mentioned parties may be given the power of attorney.

DIVISION TWO

Doctrinal Teachings of the Church

ARTICLE 1

Doctrine of the Trinity

Trinity is a theological term used to define God as an undivided unity expressed in the threefold nature of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. While the term Trinity does not appear in Scripture, the Trinitarian structure appears throughout the New Testament to affirm that God himself is manifested through Jesus Christ by means of the Spirit. A proper biblical view of the Trinity balances the concepts of unity and distinctiveness.

The Old Testament consistently affirms the unity of God through such statements as *"Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord,"* Deuteronomy 6:4. Also, the Old Testament does feature implications of the Trinitarian idea. For example, the word of God is recognized as the agent of creation (Psalms 33:6-9), revelation and salvation (Psalm 107:20).

This "Word" is given distinct personality in John 1: 1-4 in the person of Jesus Christ. Other Old Testament vocabulary categories include the wisdom of God (Proverbs 8), and the spirit of God (Genesis 1:2, and Zechariah 4:6).

The doctrine of the Trinity is a distinguishing feature of the New Testament. The presentation in no way violates the Old Testament concept of one God.

The New Testament evidence of the Trinity can be confirmed through many scriptures. Among them are; Matthew 28:19, where the model for Christian baptism is given in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is one of the clearest references to the Trinity of God.

Paul, in II Corinthians 13:14 finalizes his thoughts to the Corinthian church with a pastoral appeal grounded in *"the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit..... .."*

Other Trinitarian scriptures are; I Peter 1:2, Ephesians 4:4-6, I Corinthians 12:3-6, John 14:4-6, 15:26, and 16:13-15.

ARTICLE 2 CREATION

These opening words of the Bible, *"In the beginning God,"* are some of the most important words of the entire Scripture because it declares the existence of God and that all things have their origin in him.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Genesis 1:1 is a fact of faith. As stated in Hebrews 11:3 *"through FAITH we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."*

Science can and does support creation, but it can never prove it. We believe that God spoke the worlds into existence. Hebrews 11:3 *"through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the WORD OF GOD, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."* Also II Peter 3:5 *"..... that by the WORD OF GOD the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water."*

The United Zion Church holds to the position of a literal six-day creation. The words *"evening and morning"* of the various creation scriptures we interpret to represent one literal day.

Two facts that make the creation of humanity stand above all the other creation are;

1. Man was created in the image of God. Genesis 1:27 and,
2. God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Genesis 2:7.

ARTICLE 3 DIVINE INSPIRATION and INERRANCY of SCRIPTURE

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God,..... " II Timothy 3:16. This is reinforced many times throughout Scripture. In II Peter 1:20-21 the apostles stated that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Other references are; Jeremiah 1:9, I Corinthians 14:37, and John 5:46-47.

Knowing that the Bible originated from God, it must be consistent with His nature. Since God is true and without error, then we must believe the Scripture to be exactly what he intended; true, complete, and without error.

ARTICLE 4 THE NEW BIRTH

Ephesians 2: 1 & 5 and Colossians 2:13 tell us that in our natural state we are dead in our trespasses and sins. In John 3:3 Jesus tells Nicodemus that in order to see the kingdom of God a person needs to be born again. God the Father sent his son Jesus to lift the condemnation of death and to bring the gift of eternal life for all, (John 3:16). The way to receive this gift is through the new birth, which consists of the following:

A. Repentance. Acts 17:30, Luke 24:47, Luke 13:3

Since Scripture clearly states that all men need to repent and that repentance needs to be preached among all nations, we need to examine its meaning. Jesus said that the men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah. Jonah 3:5-7 tells us what they did.

1. They believed God. So repentance means to change our mind about God, about sin, and ourselves.
2. They humbled themselves.
3. They turned from their evil ways.
4. They fasted and prayed unto God.

Confession is also a part of repentance, (I John 1:9). Acts 3:19, after repentance comes conversion and times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

B. Regeneration.

After repentance and confession comes regeneration, which is a divine work accomplished by the power of God. The Holy Spirit miraculously regenerates, and the individual is made a new creature and becomes a child of God, (John 1:12-13).

Being justified, he has peace with God, knowing his sins are forgiven. He now stands acceptable to God, through the merits of the blood of Jesus Christ.

He can only remain justified as he walks in the light, (I John 1:7). "*... And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,*" and thereby provision is made for forgiveness and restoration, (I John 2:1).

C. Sanctification.

Sanctification is the process of being made holy, resulting in a changed life-style for the believer. The Hebrew root carries the thought of being separate, contrasted with being defiled. Thus God is separate; things and people dedicated to him and his use are separate (set apart). In the Old

Testament the focus of holiness is upon God. Since God is holy, everything that pertains to him must be holy. Old Testament scriptures speak of different things, times, places, and people that were declared Holy.

Certain times were declared holy; the Sabbath in Genesis 2:3, various festivals, Leviticus 23:4-44, the year of Jubilee, Leviticus 25:11 & 12. Also the land of Canaan, Exodus 15:13, as well as Jerusalem. The tabernacle, Exodus 25 – Leviticus 10. Also the priests and Levites.

The New Testament reflects the same range of meaning but stresses mostly the personal dimension of holiness. We are set apart to God in conversion and we live out that dedication to God in holiness. Christ's crucifixion makes possible the moving of the sinner from the defiled to the holy (that is sanctifies, makes holy), so that the believer can become a part of the temple where God dwells and is worshipped (Hebrews 10:10 and 13:11-16).

Also, Paul in Romans 15:16, I Corinthians 1:2, 6:11 and Ephesians 5:26-27 and Peter in I Peter 1:2, both affirm the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion as a sanctification, a making the believer holy so as to come before God in acceptance. Sanctification/Holiness is to be pursued as an essential aspect of the believer's daily life. Peter's quote of Leviticus 11:44 in I Peter 1:15-16, "... ..be ye holy; for I am holy" is a mandate for all believers.

ARTICLE 5 BAPTISM

The United Zion Church believes that baptism is an outward physical expression of an inward spiritual experience.

The necessity of Christian baptism is clearly taught by Jesus' example (Matthew 3:13-16, by his teaching (Matthew 28:19) and by the practice of the early church (Acts 2:38, Romans 6:3-5). We believe that only individuals who have repented and received the forgiveness of their sins are eligible for baptism.

The individual whose heart is not right in the sight of God and is baptized, only brings condemnation on themselves (Acts 8:13, 18-21). The ordinance of baptism offers no saving merit in itself (I Peter 3:21). We do not practice infant baptism because we do not believe it is taught anywhere in the scriptures.

The scriptures give definite teaching that the place to baptize is in the water (Mark 1:9, Matthew 3:13, Acts 8:36-38). Because baptism is suggestive of the death and burial of the old sinful person and the resurrection of the new, forgiven person in Jesus

Christ (Colossians 2:12), we baptize by triune immersion, once in the name of God the Father, once in the name of God the Son, and once in the name of God the Holy Spirit.

The United Zion Church does recognize other forms of baptism and will extend the right hand of church membership without the candidate being baptized again, (the exception being infant baptism).

ARTICLE 6 OUR CHRISTIAN WITNESS

Jesus, in his Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:13-16, tells his followers that they are the *"salt of the earth"* and *"the light of the world."* Peter in I Peter 2:9 says, *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."*

This requires a lifestyle that is different from the non-Christian. We are called to be separated from the "world" in our conduct, our speech, our social and business ethics, our relationships, our priorities, and our appearance. It also affects how we relate to authority and government.

A. Conduct (or our "walk").

We believe the Ten Commandments of God to Moses are the basic moral laws by which all men should live. However, as Christians, our lives need to be totally governed by them as an example to unbelievers. Romans 6:4 tells us that we need to walk in *"newness of life."* I John 2:6 tells us to walk in a Christ-like manner. Other scriptures relating to our conduct are; Ephesians 5:2 & 15, I John 1:7, Galatians 5:16, and Psalm 1. We are told to withdraw ourselves from those who walk disorderly, (II Thessalonians 3:6, II Timothy 3:1-5). This separation is not disassociation, but rather, the quiet and humble living of a Christ-like example among them.

B. Speech.

The obvious admonition for this is the 3rd commandment in Exodus 20:7, *"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."* Gossip is also inappropriate. See I Timothy 3:11, 5:13 and I Peter 4:15.

Evil speaking and slander is forbidden in the following scriptures. Ephesians 4:31, Titus 3:1 & 2, James 3:6, 4:11. The following is not scripture, but nevertheless good advice. *"If you cannot speak well of a person, speak not at all."*

C. Social and business ethics.

1. We believe that a Christian will practice honesty in his conversation and business dealings with all men. I Peter 2:12 admonishes us to *"have your conversation honest among the Gentiles....."* and I Thessalonians 4:12 *"that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without...."* Ephesians 4:25 says *"Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor..."* Proverbs 6:17 states that the Lord hates a lying tongue. To speak and live a transparent and honest life in all circumstance is a powerful testimony to the unsaved.

2. According to II Corinthians 6:14-18 we are not to be *"unequally yoked together with unbelievers."* We believe this to include business partnerships, secret clubs and lodges, and the most intimate of all relationships, marriage (more on marriage in Article 10). In Matthew 5, Jesus Sermon on the Mount, verses 33-37 we are told not to swear (make an oath) at any time, but our yes or no should be our bond.

D. Our Priorities.

"God first, others second, ourselves last." This is not only a proverb, but a way of life. The first Commandment in Exodus 20 states, *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.* The words of Jesus in Matthew 6:33 are *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."*

Commandment 2 in Exodus 20 is *"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."* Add to this scripture such as Philippians 2:2-6, I John 3:14-18 relating to brothers and Matthew 5:44, Romans 12:20 and Proverbs 25:21-22 relating to our enemies and we see the biblical principle of how to relate to others.

As for ourselves, we are to walk in humility before God (Micah 6:8, Luke 22:26, Romans 12:3, James 4:10 and I Peter 5:5). This is not to be understood as self-debasement or inferiority, but a sincere humility as we recognize who and what we are in Jesus Christ, (a sinner saved by grace).

E. Our Appearance.

1. Countenance

In Matthew 6:16 Jesus tells us not to be like the hypocrites who *"disfigure their faces when they fast."* Although this scripture is about fasting, we understand Jesus to be telling us to avoid the sad and somber countenance that some associate with religion. Rather, we are to radiate the joy and peace that comes from a meek and quiet spirit thru the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The admonition to sobriety in I Timothy 3 and Titus 2 has been misunderstood to mean that a Christian should not be a happy or smiling person. Although frivolous and foolish conduct is to be avoided, no one has more reason to be joyful than the Christian does.

2. Apparel

According to I Peter 3:3-5 and I Timothy 2:8-10 a Christian is to dress modestly and in good taste. Although these scriptures primarily are addressed to women, we understand the application to be for both men and women. As Christians we need to be modest, clean, and nicely attired, but not governed by the latest fad or fashion.

Our heritage is from the wearing of "plain" clothing for men and women and the prayer veiling for women. While we no longer require adherence to this practice, it is imperative that we do not follow the fads and fashions of this world. Moderation is the key word.

In Matthew 23:5 Jesus says of the Pharisees, *"but all their works they do to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments."* Just as excess in fashion distracts from our witness, so does "religious" attire without the accompanying quiet and meek spirit of a Spirit filled life.

F. Our response to government and authority.

The Christians duty toward world government is clearly defined in the Scriptures. Pray for them (I Timothy 2:1-2), pay taxes (Romans 13:7, Matthew 22:17-21), be subject to them (Titus 3:1, I Peter 2:13), and honor them (I Peter 2:17). All government, good or evil is there by God's design and /or permission. Therefore we need to support and be loyal to our government in all things that do not directly conflict with the Word of God.

Being a peace church we believe in the doctrine of non-resistance as taught by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:38-42. Therefore, in 1917 the United Zion Church adopted the following: We believe that the scriptures teach the doctrine of non-resistance in a qualified sense; that it is not the Christian's privilege to take up the sword, or fight with carnal weapons, yet it is his duty to be strictly loyal to the government under which he lives, in all things that do not conflict with or are not forbidden by the Word. We need to be thankful to God and our country for providing alternative opportunities for service in times of war.

ARTICLE 7 HOLY COMMUNION

The Holy Communion is one of the most sacred ordinances of the church. It brings the soul of the individual into the immediate presence of the crucified Lord. The command of the apostle, *"let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup"* (I Corinthians 11:28), is commemorative of the offering of Christ made once for complete redemption, payment, and cleansing of all sins of the whole world.

It truly shows forth the Lord's death till He comes. It links Calvary to the second coming of Christ in all his glory. In the same night in which Jesus was betrayed He took bread, and when He had blessed and broke it He said: *".... Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me"* (I Corinthians 11:24). After they had eaten, Jesus took the cup and gave thanks for it, and gave it to the disciples and said, *"....This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you"* (Luke 22:20).

We believe that the bread and the cup are Symbols of the body and blood of our Lord. The bread is unleavened in accordance with the Passover Feast (Exodus 12:8). This is done in remembrance of Christ. We must never forget the suffering of Christ. It is through the suffering that we have redemption (I Peter 1:18-19). This self-examination is for us to review our standing with Christ and our fellow man.

Feet washing:

During the night of the last supper (John 13:1-17) Jesus teaches the disciples another lesson. He rises from supper, wraps a towel around himself, and proceeds to wash his disciples' feet. This was a task usually done by the lowliest servant. He washes all of the disciple's feet, even Judas. He then tells them that he has given them an example of servant-hood to follow. In this same chapter (John 13:34-35) he gives them a new commandment, to love one another as he has loved them.

In practice, feet washing is observed by the participant wrapping a towel around himself or herself, washing and wiping the next person's feet, then greeting each other with a Holy kiss. Feet washing is usually observed before the communion service.

ARTICLE 8 CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Christ as Redeemer makes us His property (I Corinthians 6:19-20). Therefore all that we have is His as well. The practical expression of the way we use all the resources God has given us is what we call stewardship. The scripture would remind us in I Corinthians 4:2 *"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."*

The Old Testament clearly commanded that the tithe (or 1/10th) should be paid to the Lord (Leviticus 27:32). Christ approved and endorsed this commandment (Luke 11:42). The New Testament also teaches cheerful and liberal giving. *"Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him..... "* (I Corinthians 16:2a) and *"Every man according as he has purposed in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver"* (II Corinthians 9:7).

The United Zion Church believes that the local congregation is the primary receptacle for receiving the tithe of its people. The local congregation thus assumes a responsibility of stewardship of those monies for the purpose of supporting those who labor in the ministry of the gospel, for worldwide evangelism and relief as well as maintaining ministry properties, and for all our part in the responsibility of kingdom building.

Money often receives a greater attention when considering stewardship. It is important to remember that our responsibility as stewards involves not only money but also time, talents, and every phase of our living. Honesty, fairness and integrity will characterize the life of a Christian steward.

We believe there is blessing and reward in store for those who are faithful in practicing Christian stewardship (Matthew 25:21).

ARTICLE 9 DIVINE HEALING

We believe that sickness is the result of sin existing in the world. While it may sometimes come as a retribution for sins committed by the individual, it is not always so (John 9:3).

Since Jesus was manifested to destroy the work of the Devil, we believe that there is provision in the atonement for the healing of the body (Matthew 8:17).

In Mark 6:13 we read that anointing the sick was part of the work of the early church; and in James 5:13-16 we have the command and the method prescribed which is carefully followed by the church in the following manner.

Section 1

When called into the home of a brother or sister, according to James 5:13-20, for the purpose of complying with the command of anointing, the service is opened with prayer, after which James 5:13-20 is read and briefly commented upon by the

officiating Bishop or Minister, and the following questions are asked of the applicant for anointing:

Question 1. Are you at peace with God and your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and as far as possible, at peace with your fellowman?

Question 2. Are you convinced that James 5:13-20 is an express command and that by complying with it you receive a spiritual and bodily benefit according to the will of God and for His glory?

Question 3. Are you willing to comply with the whole will of God and use your health and strength to His honor and glory?

The official will now use pure olive oil and say: "I will now anoint you for the strengthening of the spirit and for the healing of the body, in the name of the Father (pouring a little oil on the head), and of the Son (pouring a little oil on the head), and of the Holy Ghost (pouring a little oil on the head)," after which the official(s) will lay hands on the head of the applicant and offer prayer.

Section 2

When called upon to anoint in a public service, have the applicant take the same position as in ordination of a minister, and ask the above questions, after which the applicant kneels. Then the same method of anointing is used as above.

ARTICLE 10 MARRIAGE

Marriage is a divine union, and the Word of God is the fundamental authority as to its importance, purpose and obligation. The divinely approved marriage relation is a union between one man and one woman, which makes of them "one flesh" (Matthew 19:5), one which is binding so long as both shall live (Matthew 19:6).

Marriage is the union upon which are built the Home and Family, all of which are clearly important and essential in God's plan for the continuance of the race, and for the preservation of true religion (Genesis 1:27-28, Deuteronomy 4:9). Any teachings, practices, or laws, which would tend to undermine or overthrow these sacred unions stand condemned in the light of God's word.

The marriage vow when once taken can never be annulled, but is binding on both parties "as long as both shall live." God's word clearly declares the unity and permanency of the marriage bond. *"Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh."*

What therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder" (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:1-9, and I Corinthians 7:39).

While the Scripture recognizes that separation may sometimes be justifiable (Matthew 5:32, I Corinthians 7:11, 15) such separation does not nullify the marriage vow, or open the way for remarriage (I Corinthians 7:11).

We believe that divorce and remarriage, while the former companion lives, constitutes adultery, both on the part of the divorcee and of the one whom he or she remarries (Matthew 5:32 and Luke 16:18).

[The following amendment was added at the 2001 General Conference of the United Zion Church].

We, the General Conference of the United Zion Church, declare that Scripture and our doctrine teach that God's intention for all people is to live in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman or in chastity in singleness. Therefore, our ministers are forbidden from conducting same-sex marriages and that same-sex unions shall not be recognized by our church, nor shall such persons who may have received a civil same-sex (homosexual or lesbian) union be blessed with church membership. Further, let it be known that no United Zion Church property shall at any time be used to perform any same-sex union.

ARTICLE 11 DEDICATION OF CHILDREN

"Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord (Psalm 127:3). As we are blessed with children whom the Lord has entrusted to us, there is no time too early to consecrate these children to the Lord. Hannah consecrated her son to the Lord before his birth (I Samuel 1:11). When this child was born she called him Samuel, and when Samuel came to the proper age, his mother took him along into the temple, also the offering as a sacrifice and lent him to the Lord as long as he liveth (I Samuel 1:24-28).

Jesus took children into His arms and blessed them. This was neither baptism nor conversion, while it did not deprive the child of these influences, necessary for the child's conversion (Matthew 19:13, Mark 10:13-14, Luke 18:15-16).

Therefore, in addition to the earlier private dedication by the parents, we do encourage them to have children publicly dedicated to the Lord and His blessings invoked upon them. This public dedication emphasizes the important and sacred responsibility of parents to their children. It gives an opportunity, if desired, to deliver a message suited to the occasion. Its regular practice serves to remind the children of this

service, (though they themselves cannot recall the event) and the sacredness of their own dedication to the Lord.

As soon as it is convenient for parents to bring the child to public services, arrangement shall be made for a service by the minister in charge; suitable message should be delivered pertaining to the sacred responsibilities to the parents in bringing this child to the Lord. While the parents hold the child in their arms near the altar, the minister shall present the following words to the parents:

"Inasmuch as it has pleased the Lord to give you this child, will you now at this time before God and these witnesses return him to the Lord by wholly dedicating and consecrating (him/her) to the Lord and His service? If so, answer: we will. Furthermore, will you promise by God's help and grace to bring this child up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord so that (he/she) may subsequently appropriate, by living faith, that spiritual life which is obtained in and through Jesus Christ? If so, answer: we will."

While the parents are in a standing posture, holding the child, the officiating minister will lay hands on the child and offer a prayer.

ARTICLE 12 **OUR BLESSED HOPE** (Second Coming of Christ)

The second coming of Christ Jesus is indeed the blessed hope of the church, or may we say every individual believer. The early church made much of this doctrine and rightly so. The church of today has a perfect right to spend even more time in teaching and preaching this all important doctrine.

We find there are at least 318 direct references in the New Testament concerning the second coming of Christ. Many of these references are the words of Christ Himself while He was here in the flesh. John 14:3 seems to be one of the best known and perhaps most precious: *".... I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."* Here we have a sure promise from the Lord of His coming again and also the reason for His coming.

How Jesus comes:

First, He is coming in like manner as He went to heaven. Acts 1:9-11 proves this to be a fact. Second, He left with a body of flesh and bone, a body which could be handled and seen, a body which could partake food according to Luke 24:39-43. This body was like in many respects to the one nailed to the cross; in fact, it was the same body without blood. Here, we like to think of the words of I John 3:2, when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Now leaving the body let us look at the manner or way of His coming, reading Luke 24:49-51 we find Jesus is giving His disciples the command to tarry at Jerusalem until they be endued with power from on high. Then He lifted up His hands and no doubt blessed them (pronounced a benediction). After this, He begins to rise and finally a cloud comes and wafts Him out of their sight.

Coming back to Acts 1:9-11, this is the way we can expect to see Him come again at the sound of the trumpet (which will probably only be heard by believers). The dead in Christ shall rise first, then they which are alive shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with Him.

We believe that the Scripture teaches the pre-tribulation rapture of the church before the wrath of Antichrist is released.

When Jesus comes:

Matthew 24:36, *"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."* These are the words of Jesus in answer to when He will come again. But Jesus reminds us that as it was in the days of Noah and also in the days of Lot so shall it be when the Son of Man cometh.

The world will carry on in its usual way, history as a rule, repeats itself. We have, however, many signs in these last days to which the word of God refers. First, we have those today who are scoffers concerning His coming. This was revealed to Peter in II Peter 3:4-9, but the Holy Spirit gave Peter an answer to words like these, God is not slack concerning His promises, but is longsuffering, a day to Him is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as a day.

To some this second coming will be such an hour as they think not, or as a thief in the night, but to the faithful ones, the following signs will help them to watch for and expect Him to come at any moment.

The budding of the fig tree, a parable of our Lord's, referring to the Jews, reminds us of our right to look for His coming. The Jews are more tolerant to the Christian religion today. Some of their leaders are beginning to consider whether Jesus of Nazareth might have been the Messiah. As a nation the Jews are even beginning to blossom. Much money is sent to the nation of Israel at Palestine.

Again for a sign let us look at the condition of the church in general, many lukewarm, departing from the old landmarks. The love of many waxing cold, have a form of godliness but denying the power thereof, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, not much regard by many to the vows and promises they made to the church of their choice.

Looking now at the condition of the world: loss of natural affection, children disobedient to parents, despisers of those who are good, little respect for the Christians, divorce, evil men's hearts failing them for fear, wars and rumors of wars, strikes, even mob violence to gain their point, earthquakes in divers places, famines, and pestilence.

Read Matthew 24:37 and Luke 17:26-28, accept these scriptures and signs, and you have a right to believe Jesus may come quickly, at any moment. Therefore, may we hasten to bring the Gospel to all peoples, then shall the end come and as believers we are encouraged to lift up our heads for our redemption from the presence of sin draweth nigh.

ARTICLE 13 ABORTION (Pro-life position)

The United Zion Church teaches us to view life with a sacredness. The sanctity of life, we believe, begins with conception and that a fetus is human, alive and known by God (Psalms 139:15-16 and Jeremiah 1:5).

That abortion (any intentional taking of an unborn life) is not acceptable, and further, the church shall promote the sanctity of human life, from conception to death.

God's love is not diminished for anyone who has experienced an abortion. This is not an unpardonable sin. To experience forgiveness one must simply go to God and confess the sin with a humble heart and a contrite spirit. True repentance acknowledges the reality of the guilt and does not try to justify it.

Anyone who approaches God with true humility, contrition, and an earnest desire not to commit the sin again will surely receive the forgiveness of God. Forgiveness is one of the marvels of God's grace. Its healing power is magnificent. When He forgives we are forgiven. When God cleanses us, we are made clean. God brings restoration.

DIVISION THREE

Church Polity

ARTICLE 1 GENERAL CONFERENCE

Section 1. Function and Meetings

- (a.) The General Conference is a representative body through which the denomination acts to carry out its objectives. Supervisory, legislative, and policy making powers are vested in the General Conference.
- (b.) There shall be an annual meeting of the General Conference with this meeting being held on the fourth Saturday of March.
- (c.) The place of meeting shall be decided by the General Conference Program Committee who is responsible for planning the agenda and program of the Conference.

Section 2. Membership

- (a.) The Conference body shall be composed of ordained officials, licensed ministers, missionaries, all general conference board members, and lay delegates.
- (b.) Each Congregation shall be represented by lay delegates who are chosen by the Congregational Council at a ratio of one to every 15 members or part thereof.

Section 3. Officers

- (a.) The officers of the General Conference shall consist of a Moderator, an assistant Moderator, Secretary and an assistant Secretary. Any other additional clerical staff or personnel that may be needed can be appointed by the officers of the Conference. The duties of these officials shall be such as pertain to officers of like deliberative bodies.

Section 4. Method of Organization

- (a.) The Bishop shall serve as the Moderator of the General Conference.
- (b.) Assistant Moderator – The Chairman of the Board of Administration shall serve as the Assistant Moderator of General Conference.
- (c.) Secretary – The Secretary shall be appointed by the Board of Administration on an annual basis. The secretary shall at all times be in possession of the Charter and Corporate Seal.
- (d.) Assistant Secretary – The Assistant Secretary shall be appointed by the Board of Administration on an annual basis.

Section 5. Installations

At the conclusion of the Conference Sessions there shall be an installation service for all newly elected Board members and committee persons and any other appointees for the new conference year. This service shall be conducted by the Conference Moderator.

DIVISION FOUR

General Administration

ARTICLE 1 GENERAL CHURCH BOARDS

Section 1. Functions

The important phases of the work of the church shall be carried on under the direction of General Church (denominational) Boards chosen by the General Conference.

Section 2. Number and Size

The number and size of said Boards, and term of office of members shall determined by General Conference.

Section 3. Organization

Each Board shall effect an organization which will be adequate for the efficient carrying on of its work.

Section 4. Commissions

Phases of Board work, or of related work, may be cared for by the setting up of Commissions within or in connection with the Boards. All Commission appointments shall be subject to confirmation by General Conference.

Section 5.

Each Board or Committee member shall serve a three year term unless otherwise provided for by General Conference. Each member shall be eligible for re-election or re-appointment.

Section 6.

In the event of death or resignation of any member, the remaining members shall fill the unexpired term by an appointment as they would choose.

Section 7.

Each Board shall organize annually by electing a chairman, a secretary, and treasurer (if needed); also such other officers as may be considered necessary. The

duties of the chairman, secretary, and treasurer of the Boards shall be such as usually pertain to such officers.

The chairman shall serve as presiding officer. The secretary shall keep careful and complete minute records of Board actions and such other records as are necessary for the work of the Board. The treasurer, as custodian of Board funds, shall use a satisfactory bookkeeping system approved by the Board and which also provides for permanency of records.

Upon retirement of any officers they shall pass to their successors all records in their custody. Each Board shall be directly responsible to the General Conference to which body it shall present an annual report. All financial statements shall bear the approved certification of a competent auditor.

Section 8.

All ordained and licensed officials shall retire from active service as Pastors and Deacons at age 65 unless they thereafter serve on the basis of an annual referendum. It shall be the responsibility of the Bishop to counsel as needed with the involved Church (congregational) Board and the official, concerning the official's continued service.

ARTICLE 2 BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION

Section 1.

- (a.) The Board shall consist of 15 members of which 9 shall be ordained or licensed persons, and 6 shall be lay persons. All members shall serve 3 year terms.
- (b.) The members of this Board shall be nominated on the basis of their qualifications, geographical location and willingness to cooperate with the denomination.
- (c.) The Bishop shall serve as an ex-officio member on all General Conference Boards and committees, with voting privileges.

Section 2.

The Chairman of the Board of Administration shall serve as the Assistant Moderator of General Conference. All other officers needed for the efficient operation

of this Board shall be chosen by the Board annually, with the exception of the treasurer, who shall serve a 3 year term.

Section 3. Duties

- (a.) To receive from each Congregational Council an annual report of the activities of the congregation,
- (b.) In the event of a vacancy in the office of Bishop, the Board of Administration shall supervise the denomination until the convening of the next General Conference.
- (c.) To be responsible for the overall operation and functioning of the denomination, the Board is authorized to make any decisions or declarations that need to be made between conferences.

Section 4. Commissions

In carrying on its work the Board shall function through 3 Commissions: the Commission on Ministerial Credentials and Stationing, the Commission on Nominations, and the Commission on Programming.

Section 5. Commission on Ministerial Credentials and Stationing

- (a.) This commission shall be composed of 5 members who are also members of the Board of Administration, but not members of the Commission on Nominations and the Commission on Programming.
- (b.) Shall be responsible for establishing standards and requirements which are to be met by the Bishop, ministers, missionaries, and deacons.
- (c.) Shall annually organize by electing such officers as may be deemed necessary.
- (d.) Shall report to the Board of Administration the assignment or reassignment of Pastors.
- (e.) Shall be responsible for examining any candidate who is recommended for the Christian ministry.

Section 6. Commission on Nominations

- (a.) This commission shall be composed of 5 members who are members of the Board of Administration, but not members of the Commission on Ministerial Credentials and Stationing or the Commission on Programming.
- (b.) Shall annually organize by electing such officers as may be deemed necessary.
- (c.) Shall present nominees to the General Conference to fill any offices which are vacant either by expiration or resignation. These nominees shall be chosen without personal bias. The choices shall be made by giving consideration to geographical location, educational qualities, spiritual maturity, and emotional stability.

Section 7. Commission on Programming

- (a.) This commission shall be composed of 5 members who are members of the Board of Administration, but not members of the Commission on Ministerial Credentials and Stationing or the Commission on Nominations.
- (b.) Shall annually organize by electing such officers as may be deemed necessary.
- (c.) Shall have supervision or program planning and guidance for the periods of time not used by the sessions of General Conference.

ARTICLE 3 BOARD OF MISSIONS

Section 1. Purpose

The Board shall advance the cause of Christ and the Church through Missions, at home and abroad and Christian Service Ministries.

Section 2. Personnel

The Board shall be composed of 5 representative members of the Church. The members of this Board shall be persons who show definite interest in Missions.

Section 3. Organization

The Board shall annually organize by electing a chairman, assistant chairman, secretary, assistant secretary, and treasurer. Each member of the Board shall serve for 3 years.

Section 4. Duties

- (a.) This Board shall be responsible for the oversight and supervision of all missionary activities including both Home and World Missions.
- (b.) Consider applicants for missionary service who present satisfactory recommendation from their congregation and proper health certificates. If the applicant is considered favorably the Board shall recommend him or her to the Commission on Ministerial Credentials and Stationing for doctrinal examination.
- (c.) See that the congregations throughout the church promote and encourage interest in Missionary activity; also provide suitable opportunity for Missionary financial needs.
- (d.) At each General Conference give a report of their work and activities.
- (e.) Provide information and directions in regards to other Christian Service ministries such as: 1-W service programs and Voluntary Service programs. The Board shall at all times keep itself abreast with today's opportunities and make them available to our youth.

ARTICLE 4 BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Section 1. Purpose

The Board shall promote congregational life in areas of nurture, fellowship, service, and coordinate the review, recommendation, and preparation of teaching materials for use in the United Zion Church.

Section 2. Personnel

The Board shall consist of 9 members, elected by General Conference, for a three (3) year term.

- (a.) The Board may appoint administrative persons to direct various phases of its ministry, outline their duties, and fix their compensation (if any).

Section 3. Organization

- (a.) The Board shall organize annually by electing a chairman, secretary and assistant for each.
- (b.) The Board shall appoint the treasurer for a 3 year term.
- (c.) The Chairman shall be an ex-officio member on each of the three Ministries within the Board.

Section 4. Ministries

The Board shall carry on its work through 3 major areas of ministry. They shall be:

1. Family Ministries
2. Youth Ministries
3. Congregational Ministries

- (a.) Each shall organize annually by selecting a chairman and a secretary.

Section 5. Duties

- (a.) To promote personal salvation, commitment to a sanctified life, Christian growth, maturity and a holiness life style, including church membership and participation in Christian service.
- (b.) To provide and promote effective ways, means and models for the development of spiritual life and growth in congregations.
- (c.) To support congregational leaders with seminars, workshops or conferences for nurture and enrichment.
- (d.) To offer and promote effective Christian education for each congregation including such options as consultative services, resource materials, motivational and training experiences.
- (e.) To promote enrichment of family life within the congregation including pre-marriage, marriage, family living, Christian nurture in the home and church/home relationships.
- (f.) To assist with development and promotion of a Christian camping program.

- (g.) To provide consultative services for congregations seeking to establish a nursery school, preschool, or elementary education program or home-school programs.
- (h.) To serve the Church in any other educational or edifying concern as may be assigned by the General Conference or its Board of Administration.

Section 6. Meetings

The Board shall hold regular meetings each conference year as are necessary in the discharge of its duties.

- (a.) Each of the 3 Ministries shall meet as necessary to discharge their duties.

Section 7. Reports

The Board and each of the 3 Ministries shall annually make a report to the General Conference of the United Zion Church, together with any necessary recommendations that will provide for its ongoing ministry.

- (a.) The Board shall annually make a financial report to the General Conference.
- (b.) Each Ministry shall give a report at all meetings of the Board of Christian Education.

ARTICLE 5 CAMP GROVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. Personnel

The Board shall be composed of 9 representative members of the church.

Section 2. Organization

The Board shall annually organize by selecting a chairman, assistant chairman, secretary, assistant secretary and treasurer. All members shall serve a 3 year term.

Section 3. Duties

- (a.) To plan for the annual Camp Meeting and all other programs or special events being held at the camp grounds.
- (b.) To provide for the general maintenance of the camp grounds and at all times keep it that it is conducive to Christian worship.
- (c.) To be responsible for the finances of the camp grounds and make an annual report to the General Conference.

ARTICLE 6 UNITED ZION RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

Section 1. Personnel

The Board shall be composed of 9 representative members of the church.

Section 2. Organization

The Board shall annually organize by electing a chairman, assistant chairman, secretary, assistant secretary and treasurer. Each member shall serve a 3 year term.

Section 3. Duties

- (a.) To have supervision of the overall operation of the Home.
- (b.) To select an administrator who shall meet regularly with the Board of Trustees to give a report of the operation of the Home.
- (c.) To report to the General Conference an annual Financial and General Report on the activities of the Home.

ARTICLE 7 PUBLICATION BOARD

Section 1. Personnel

The Board shall be composed of 5 representative members of the church. Each shall serve a 3 year term.

Section 2. Organization

The Board shall annually elect the following officers, namely: chairman, assistant chairman, secretary, assistant secretary and treasurer.

Section 3. Duties

- (a.) To supervise the publication of the church's periodical.
- (b.) To select any personnel that is needed in the operation of their work.
- (c.) To provide for finances which are needed in the operation of their work.

DIVISION FIVE

Local Government and Practice

ARTICLE 1 LOCAL CONGREGATIONS

Section 1. Membership

- (a.) The membership of the congregation shall consist of those who have been received into the church on the basis of their personal knowledge and testimony of God's saving grace and their acceptance of the obligations as presented in the membership vows.

Section 2. Purpose

The Congregation should recognize the vital part it plays in accomplishing the object of the United Zion Church which is to promote the worship of the Almighty God and to disseminate His Gospel and it should strive to carry out its responsibility in this endeavor by an active and effective local program and by giving its loyal support to the general program of the church.

Section 3. Organization

- (a.) The annual Congregational Council meeting shall determine policy for the congregation.
- (b.) The secretary of the Church Board shall serve as secretary of the congregation. The secretary shall record all actions of congregational business meetings and preserve the same to be given to his successor upon completion of his term in office. He shall forward all materials intended for the General Conference to the General Conference Secretary. He shall provide statistical data required by the Bishop or any one else who might need such information. He shall keep an accurate record of the congregational membership showing net gain or loss in number, recording baptisms, elections, ordinations and such other valuable information of interest to the congregation.
- (c.) The treasurer of the congregation shall be an individual responsible for discharging the duties connected with handling the congregation finances. He shall keep accurate records using a bookkeeping system approved by the Conference of the Church. He shall report annually to

the congregation and to the Church Board as directed. All his financial records are to be audited by an authorized auditor.

Section 4. Government

- (a.) The Pastor shall preside at the Congregational Council Meetings, unless other directions are given by the governing body of the denomination. In the event that the Pastor cannot preside, the Assistant Pastor or Deacon shall preside at the Council.
- (b.) Members in fellowship with the congregation, 16 years of age and older are entitled to a voice and vote in any elections and business meetings.
- (c.) No special congregational council meeting may be called without consent of the Church Board, and a public notice given at least one service prior to the special meeting.
- (d.) All items for the Congregational Council meeting shall be presented to the Church Board which shall be responsible to prepare the agenda for release in a regular service prior to Council.
- (e.) All group activities carried on within the congregation shall be subject to the approval of the Pastor and the Church Board and shall be correlated with the total program of the congregation.
- (f.) Delegates shall be elected annually to the General Conference. Each congregation shall be entitled to one delegate for each fifteen members or part thereof.

Section 5. Congregational Boards

- (a.) Congregational Church Boards
 - 1. Each local congregation shall be organized with a Church Board.
 - 2. The duties of the Church Board shall be to provide for the administration of the local congregation in all its phases as directed by the Congregational Council and General Conference rulings.
 - 3. Organization
 - i. The Board shall organize annually; the Pastor shall serve as chairman unless otherwise mutually agreed upon.
 - ii. The secretary and treasurer of the Church Board shall also serve as secretary and treasurer of the congregation.

- iii. There may be an assistant chairman and assistant secretary and other additional organization that may work for efficient operation.

4. Personnel

- i. The Board shall consist of the Pastor and all other active ordained officials of the congregation and a number of lay representatives equal to the number of deacons and such additional congregational leaders as may be considered essential to the efficient local administration, who shall serve for a 3 year term.
- ii. All members of the Board should be spiritually qualified by being able to give personal testimony of salvation and should carry a concern for the local congregational program.

5. Functions

- i. To serve in an advisory capacity to the Pastor.
- ii. To determine matters of policy within the scope of Council authorization and to cooperate with the Pastor in planning the congregational program.
- iii. To receive and review questions for Congregational Council and when advisable, to make recommendations to the Council.
- iv. To be empowered to call special Congregational Councils.
- v. To make provision for or serve as a Budget Committee.
- vi. To make provision for or serve as a Nominating Committee for all elective offices.
- vii. To be responsible for questions of membership and discipline.

(b.) Congregational Board of Trustees

- 1. All real estate belonging to the church shall be held in trust by not less than three persons known as Trustees.
- 2. Trustees for local church property must be members of the local United Zion Church. Should a trustee withdraw from the membership of the

United Zion Church or be excluded there from, his trusteeship shall automatically cease from the date of such withdrawal or exclusion.

3. The term for Trustees shall be for 3 years.

4. Duties

- i. The Board of Trustees shall organize by electing a chairman and secretary; any additional officers or subcommittees may be chosen from time to time as the Board may deem necessary. The chairman shall be responsible for the calling and directing of all meetings. The secretary shall be responsible for the safe keeping of all minutes and records that may need to be kept. The deeds and any important papers shall at all times be in the hands of the secretary. All records of the trustees shall pass to their successors in office.
- ii. The trustees shall adequately insure, care for and keep in necessary repair all church property. In no case shall they be privileged to expend money for extensive repairs or alterations without the consent of the group whom they serve.
- iii. The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the appointment of a head usher and the securing of a janitor.
- iv. The Board of Trustees shall give an annual report to the groups whom they serve.
- v. The Board shall meet quarterly or at the call of the chairman.

(c.) Women's Missionary Prayer Circle

Each congregation shall be encouraged to organize a local Women's Missionary Prayer Circle which will hold monthly meetings or as the group deems advisable. All sisters of the congregation are strongly urged to be members of this Circle by taking a keen interest in the activities of this organization. Any organization deemed advisable by the membership of this Circle should be provided for by the membership so that the program may operate efficiently. The Circle shall at all times work closely with the denomination's Board of Missions.

(d.) Educational Boards

The Sunday School, Bible School, Youth work and any other educational agency shall develop an effective organization as directed by the Board of Christian Education and the local Congregational Council so that each agency may best serve its people.

Section 6. Requirements for Membership

- (a.) The numerical growth of the church should be the concern of each congregation.
- (b.) It shall be the duty of the Pastor to encourage church membership for those in his parish who have a personal knowledge and give a clear testimony of God's saving grace and to assure them of a warm welcome into our fellowship.
- (c.) Applicants shall be baptized by triune immersion. If the individual has been previously baptized, he may be admitted into church fellowship without rebaptism. (Infant baptism is not accepted.)
- (d.) Candidates for church membership shall be approved by the church board. Announcement of the candidates' names shall be made in a public service in advance of the reception service. (Should any member of the congregation know any good reason why any of the candidates should not be received into church membership, he may present his reasons to the pastor, or a member of the Church Board, during the intervening period).
- (e.) At the reception service the prospective members shall be requested to give short personal testimonies after which they shall indicate their acceptance of the obligations of the membership vows, thereby pledging their allegiance to God and their Fidelity to the Church.

Section 7. Membership Standards

- (a.) Christian Stewardship that recognizes one's responsibility to the church in the practice of systematic and scriptural giving, attendance at the appointed services of the church, and dedication of one's personal talents and abilities to assist in the program of the church.
- (b.) The church recommends conformity to the scriptural teaching on the prayer veiling as taught in I Corinthians 11 and a consistent recognition of the doctrine of non-conformity.

- (b.) The church recommends conformity to the scriptural teaching on the prayer veiling as taught in I Corinthians 11 and a consistent recognition of the doctrine of non-conformity.
- (c.) A person shall not be eligible for membership in this church who retains membership in a lodge or secret organization.
- (d.) The church does not approve of the use of tobacco nor the use of alcoholic or intoxicating drinks.
- (e.) Homosexuality. By the teaching in God's word and our acceptance of his declaration that homosexuality is sinful and outside the realm of his purpose for creating mankind, we cannot accept and do not condone the homosexual, gay or lesbian lifestyle. Therefore, any practicing homosexual or lesbian shall not be accepted for membership in the United Zion Church, nor shall the United Zion Church accept any homosexual candidate for an ordained, licensed, missionary, leadership or teaching position

Section 8. Duties of Members

- (a.) It shall be the duty of each member of the church to adhere to the doctrines of the church.
- (b.) Each member is expected to do his best to cooperate with the specific congregation of which he is a part. Officials are no exception to the rule.
- (c.) When misunderstanding arises, the vow which was made when the church membership was obtained, should at all times be remembered. Matthew chapter 18 is the guide of action.
- (d.) When physically fit each member is expected to attend worship on each Lord's Day and not neglect the prayer meeting and business meetings.
- (e.) It is not good church loyalty for members to absent themselves from their own home services to attend other places of worship.
- (f.) It is the duty of each household to have family worship. When the head of the household is not a Christian, the wife is strongly encouraged if possible to have family worship with the members of the family. When the parents are not converted and there are children who are, we also strongly encourage them to have family worship.
- (g.) Any member not attending services in his or her local congregation for a period of six months shall be removed from the membership list. Physical limitations are an exception. Anyone moving out of the geographical area of

their congregation is encouraged to support and join a local church within one year. (To exclude students, missionaries, and military personnel).

Section 9. Excommunication of Members

- (a.) No member shall be excommunicated without first observing due diligence in loving forbearance, as outlined in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 18.
- (b.) Members shall be excommunicated only by the Bishop, or by someone authorized by the Bishop, either in private or public, as condition of the case may require. However, any member committing adultery as described in the doctrinal teachings of the church, (Article 10, Marriage) would automatically excommunicate themselves from membership in the United Zion Church. Diligence should be given that the expressions used in excommunicating members do not taint after enmity, prejudice, or anything that would show as though the church organization would be concerned about the spiritual welfare to the member excommunicated.
- (c.) The attitude toward excommunicated members shall be consistent with the teaching of the Word in such circumstances.
- (d.) Upon confession of their sin and a positive testimony of their right relationship with God, a person who has been excommunicated from the United Zion Church may be reinstated at the discretion the local congregation.

DIVISION SIX

Church Officials

ARTICLE 1 ELECTION OF OFFICIALS

Section 1.

The Bishop shall be elected from among the ministers of the church.

- (a.) The Bishop who is currently serving shall be voted on yes or no, whether he shall continue to serve. The voting shall be by the delegates to General Conference. Each term of service shall begin July 1.
- (b.) If the vote is no or a vacancy exists, a search committee shall be chosen by the Board of Administration who will submit a name or names to the General Conference and the delegates of the General Conference would then vote for a new Bishop.

Section 2.

The selection of ministers shall be at the discretion of the Board of Administration. The selection shall be made by a ballot vote of the congregation where the person is to serve or any other method deemed advisable by the Board of Administration.

Section 3.

In all church elections resulting in tie votes, a succeeding election shall be held with the person receiving the highest vote elected.

Section 4.

In all church elections where advisable, nominees shall be provided and the members 16 years of age and older shall be given an opportunity to cast their ballot.

ARTICLE 2 BISHOP

Section 1. Qualifications

Scriptural qualifications for a Bishop are designated in II Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-16. A Bishop shall be chosen from the ordained ministers with due consideration being given to pastoral experience, administrative leadership, ability, and to the possession of those qualities of spiritual maturity, wisdom, and good judgment as are required by the position.

Section 2. Duties

The Bishop as the administrative head shall give particular attention to the following duties:

- (a.) To provide pastoral services for each congregation.
- (b.) To stimulate the work of the church by his preaching and promote the program of the church through his administrative service.
- (c.) To advise, counsel, guide, and inspire pastors in spiritual growth, congregational planning, and personal improvement for more effective service individually and collectively through study groups, in-service training and ministerial retreats.
- (d.) To promote unity of teaching among the ministers and adhere to the doctrines and practices of the church on the part of the membership.
- (e.) To support the general program of the church as reflected through the actions of General Conference and shall encourage and promote the same.
- (f.) Shall be an ex-officio member of all General Conference boards and committees, attending what meetings are possible, and shall receive minutes from each meeting.
- (g.) Shall serve as a delegate to the Mennonite Central Committee-East Coast Board.
- (h.) Shall function according to the assigned job description provided by the Board of Administration and their annual review of his ministry.

Section 3. Term of Service

The initial term of service shall be 3 years. The length of each additional term shall not exceed a three year term.

ARTICLE 3 PASTORS

Section 1. Qualifications

- (a.) He must give clear testimony to the new birth and evidence of the anointing of God upon his life.
- (b.) He should be able to teach and lead others and give evidence of a divine call to this sacred office.
- (c.) He must affirm a sincere belief in the doctrinal teachings as adopted by the church and be willing to be directed by the decisions of General Conference.
- (d.) He must be intelligently prepared and emotionally stable that his leadership might be conducive to spiritual and numerical growth.
- (e.) No one, having been divorced and remarried shall be eligible to serve as Pastor or be ordained to said position.

Section 2. Duties

- (a.) The Pastor shall under the direction and counsel of his Bishop, cooperate with his Church Board and congregational council in assuming administrative responsibility for his congregation and effect a working organization for each phase of congregational life.
- (b.) He shall promote the general welfare of the church at large by keeping the congregation informed about her institutions, missions, activities, and historical development.
- (c.) He shall endeavor faithfully to shepherd his flock by providing an adequate and well-balanced program of doctrinal teaching, conducting visitation and giving pastoral counsel and advice.

- (d.) He shall stimulate by the contagion of his life and example as well as by his effective preaching the outlook and vision of his people and inspire them to holy living, more effectual witnessing and more dedicated devotion to the total church program and the work of the kingdom in our age.
- (e.) He shall ever seek to promote within his congregation an aggressive spirit of evangelism by which he shall stimulate and train his people for effective personal witnessing and community outreach with a definite concern for the numerical growth of his congregation.
- (f.) He shall exercise full pastoral leadership in initiating a program of church activities conducive to the spiritual welfare of all members of his congregation.
- (g.) The Pastor shall be an Ex-officio member of all Boards and committees serving in the congregation.
- (h.) The Pastor shall not contract bills nor create financial obligations for the local church unless he has been duly authorized by the church board or congregation.
- (i.) He shall assume the responsibility to officiate at the reception of members, administer baptism, supervise the commemoration of the Lord's Supper and preside at congregational councils.
- (j.) He is authorized to solemnize marriage, conduct funeral services, and anoint the sick.

Section 3. Term of Service

The initial term of service shall be 3 years unless a special need calls for a shorter term. The length of each additional term of service shall not exceed a 3 year period.

ARTICLE 4 ASSISTANT PASTORS

Section 1. Qualifications

- (a.) The qualifications listed for the Pastor in Article III, Section I shall apply to the assistant pastor.

Section 2. Duties

- (a.) The assistant pastor shall at all times cooperate with and share in any activities where there may be need for assistance.
- (b.) The specific areas of service designated to the assistant shall be at the discretion of the congregation and pastor.
- (c.) The assistant pastor shall be an Ex-Officio member of all Boards and committees of the congregation.

Section 3. Term of Service

- (a.) The initial term of service shall be 3 years, unless a special need calls for a shorter term. The length of each additional term of service shall not exceed a 3 year period.

ARTICLE 5 LICENSED MINISTERS

Section 1. Description

A licensed minister is one who is granted a formal license as a ministerial credential. The candidate for license shall prove himself effective in the work of the Lord. He shall be deemed worthy of his status by holding a burden for the ministry of the Word and by showing concern in this regard, through activity, study, and zeal in pursuit of adequate training for the work of the ministry. No one, having been divorced and remarried shall be eligible to serve as a Licensed Minister or be ordained to said position.

Section 2. How licensed

The applicant for ministerial license shall make application to the commission on ministerial credentials and stationing through his Bishop and Church Board. To qualify for a ministerial license a satisfactory recommendation of the applicant must be supplied by his home congregation and his doctrinal position must be approved by the commission on ministerial credentials and stationing. A renewal of license is conditional upon proper recommendation.

Section 3. Subject to Congregation

The services of a licensed minister residing in a congregation of which he is not the pastor shall be subject to the discretion of the congregation.

Section 4. Administrative Privileges

When assigned as a Pastor a licensed minister may exercise such administrative functions as are authorized by the Bishop or by the Board under which he serves.

Section 5. Term of License

A ministerial license shall be granted for a period of 1 year.

Section 6. Ordination

A licensed minister may be presented for ordination upon the decision and recommendation of his home congregation by way of the Bishop. The stationing committee and General Church Boards may present names directly to the Commission on Ministerial Credentials and Stationing for consideration and approval. Ordination may proceed only upon approval of the commission on ministerial credentials and stationing.

ARTICLE 6 DEACON

Section 1. Qualifications

The scriptural qualifications for a deacon are outlined in I Timothy 3:8-12 and Acts 6:3. He must give clear evidence of a Christian experience. He should be sufficiently mature to qualify him to advise others and to share in the responsibility of the local administration. He must affirm a sincere belief in the Articles of Faith adopted by the church. No one, having been divorced and remarried shall be eligible to serve as a Deacon or be ordained to said position.

Section 2. Election

A recommendation for election of a deacon may be made to the congregational council by the church board in consultation with the Bishop. If the recommendation is approved the election may be carried out in the manner approved by the church.

Section 3. Duties

- (a.) They shall be members of the church board.
- (b.) They shall share in the membership and community visitation conducted by the church.

- (c.) They shall carry a vital concern for the needy of the congregation and report findings to the church board.
- (d.) They shall assume responsibility for the material aspects of the church program so that the ministers may devote more time and energy to the spiritual.
- (e.) They shall have charge of the preparation necessary on Love Feast occasions and supervise the practice of washing the Saints' feet.
- (f.) Upon the absence of the ministers they may officiate at the public services as directed by the church board or by the person responsible for filling the vacancy caused by the pastor's absence.

Section 4. Term of Service

The initial term of service shall be 3 years. The length of each additional term of service shall not exceed a 3 year term.

ARTICLE 7 ORDAINED AND LICENSED WIVES OF OFFICIALS

Section 1.

By virtue of her position, the wife of an ordained and licensed official should be an example in word, in dress, and in conduct, conforming to the standards of Scripture and of the church in these respects, 1 Timothy 3:11. She should also share wholeheartedly with her husband's office, and whenever possible should accompany him on official and pastoral visits.

Section 2.

Upon Love Feast occasions the deacon's wife, or deacons' wives should have charge of the sisters in conducting the ordinance of the washing of the Saints feet and the officials' wives should head the groups in the communion service.

Section 3.

In the event of the death of an official the surviving widow shall retain the privileges granted by this article.

ARTICLE 8 MISSIONARIES

Section 1. Qualifications

Missionaries shall be able to give a vital personal testimony of saving grace. It is necessary that the person shall have a fully consecrated and spirit filled life. The person

should be able to give evidence of a divine call to this field of service. The person should possess such personal qualifications as would be an asset to the person in the work of teaching, ministering to others, and leading them to Christ. The person must affirm a sincere belief in the Articles of Faith as adopted by the Church.

Section 2. Duties

The supreme duty of the missionary is to make Christ known to a lost world, and to encourage acceptance of Him as personal Savior and Lord. This can be done both through direct preaching and by engaging in various forms of industrial, social or religious activities of the Mission for the ultimate purpose of establishing a self-supporting and self-propagating indigenous church.

Section 3. Assignment

All Missionaries shall serve under the direction of the Board of Missions.

Notes

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