

### **RULE NO. 3**

#### ***Complaints***

(a) A Complaint brought pursuant to Article VIII, § D of the Church of God in Christ Official Manual and submitted to the Board of Bishops shall be in writing, dated, and properly verified (a document will be considered properly verified where a notary executes it with the language, “Signed and sworn to (or affirmed) before me on (date) by (the name of the person)” setting forth in simple, concise, and direct statements –

(1) the name and legal address of the party filing the Complaint (hereinafter referred to as the “Complainant”);

(2) the name and legal address of legal counsel for the Complainant, if any;

(3) the name and position or title of the Respondent;

(4) the nature of the alleged violation of the Church of God in Christ Official Manual or of other law, rule, regulation, or other standard of conduct applicable to the performance of duties or discharge of responsibilities;

(5) the facts alleged to give rise to the violation. The Complaint shall not contain innuendo, speculative assertions, or conclusory statements; and

(6) a statement whether the Complaint is being brought in the Respondent’s capacity as a Jurisdictional Bishop or in some other capacity, *e.g.*, a pastor or Auxiliary Bishop.

(b) If the Complaint is being brought against the Bishop for his conduct in his capacity as a pastor of a local congregation, the Complainant must certify in writing that the Complaint is being brought by a majority of the members of the local congregation.

(c) A Complaint must be accompanied by a certification, which may be unsworn, that the Complainant has provided an exact copy of the filed Complaint and all attachments to the Respondent.

(d) Any documents in the possession of the Complainant that relate to the allegations may be submitted with the Complaint.

(e) The Executive Committee of the Board of Bishops by majority vote may defer action on a Complaint against a Bishop when the Complaint alleges conduct that the Executive Committee of the Board of Bishops has reason to believe is being reviewed by appropriate law enforcement or regulatory authorities, or when the Board of Bishops determines that it is appropriate for the conduct alleged in the Complaint to be reviewed initially by law enforcement or regulatory authorities. If action is deferred, the Secretary must inform both the Complainant and Respondent, in writing, of the decision to defer action. In no event shall the Board of Bishops defer action longer than 180 days from the date the Complaint is initially received by the Board of Bishops. At the end of the deferral period, the Secretary of the Board of Bishops shall notify in writing the parties and their counsel that the action has commenced and the days which have expired prior to the notice of deferral shall be assessed against the requirement of final resolution set forth in Rule of Procedure No. 4.

(f) A Complaint may not be amended without leave of the Board of Bishops. Otherwise, any new allegations of improper conduct must be submitted in a new Complaint that independently meets the procedural requirements of the Rules of the Board of Bishops.

(g) (1) The Board of Bishops shall not consider a Complaint, nor shall any investigation be undertaken by the Board of Bishops, of any alleged violation which occurred more than three (3) years prior to the date of submission unless the Board of Bishops determines

that the conduct supporting the alleged violation is directly related to a violation which occurred within the three (3) years.

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions contained in paragraph (1), if the Complaint alleges matters of sexual misconduct as set forth in the Sexual Misconduct Policy Handbook promulgated by the Office of the General Counsel of the Church of God in Christ, the Board of Bishops shall consider the Complaint only if the alleged violations occurred within the previous ten (10) years or if the Complainant alleges that the Respondent engaged in behavior to cover up or hide the violation. If the Complainant alleges that the victim of sexual misconduct was less than 18 years of age at the time of the alleged violations, the Board of Bishops shall consider the Complaint at any point up to ten (10) years after the victim turns 21 years of age.