MANUAL

of the

CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST

FIFTH EDITION

Revised 1951

Published by the authorization and approval of Bishop C. H. Mason, Senior Bishop and Founder of the Church of God in Christ.

This Discipline is subject to being revised annually by the General Assembly.

COMPILATION AND EDITORIAL COMMISSION

Bishop Ozro T. Jones
Elder J. E. Bryant

Copyright 1951

All rights reserved — no part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publisher

Printed in the United States of America
# Table of Contents

Preface ................................................. 5-6

Brief History of the Church of God in Christ .... 7-9

## Part I

1—The Constitution

Certified copy of Amendment to Charter of Incorporation of the Church of God In Christ .................................... 10-23

Recommendations Adopted by General Council ................................................................. 24-25

By-Laws of Saints' Home Industrial School of Mississippi .................................................... 26-40

2—Articles of Religion

Doctrine of the Church Of God In Christ ................................................................. 41-66

3—General Rules of Order

General Rules of Order ................................................................. 67-72

## Part II

The Local Church

Church Membership ................................................................. 73

## Part III

The Ministry

Apostles ................................................................. 74-75

Prophets ................................................................. 75-76

Evangelists ................................................................. 76-77

Pastors ................................................................. 77-78

Overseers ................................................................. 78-79

Teachers ................................................................. 80

Deacons ................................................................. 80-81

Deaconesses ................................................................. 81

Bishops' Council ................................................................. 82-83
PART IV
TEMPORAL ECONOMY

Support of the Ministry .................. 84-86

PART V
JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

Reception and Expelling Members ............... 87
Trial of Ministers .......................... 87-88
Trial of Pastors ............................. 88

PART VI
DEPARTMENT OF AUXILIARIES

Department of Sunday School .................. 89-90
Department of Women's Work .................. 90-94
Department of Education ...................... 95
Department of Young People's Work ............ 96-103
Home and Foreign Missions Board ............. 104-108

PART VII
RITUAL

Form of Solemnization of Matrimony ........... 108-111
Order of Burial of the Dead ................... 112-114
Dedication of Churches ....................... 114-115
Laying of Cornerstone ....................... 115-117

APPENDIX

Staff of Bishops
Executive Officers
State Overseers
State Mothers
Assistant State Mothers
PREFACE

To the members of the Church of God in Christ,
Greetings:

It is our privilege and duty to again recommend to you this volume which contains the doctrine and discipline of the Church of God in Christ as has been revised, which we believe coincides with the Word of God.

This book grows out of years of experience. Evidently God’s blessings have been with us and we have seen an unparalleled work extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the Gulf to the Great Lakes. Also, there have been planted successful missions in Africa and many of the isles of the sea. Now after a thorough examination of many published manuals, which are accessible to the clergymen, we found so much that was impractical and unscriptural, that after a prayerful consideration, we were driven back to God’s Holy Word as the only sufficient rule of faith and practice for the Church of God. We have aimed to supply a practical want in a practical way. Whereas the Great God of heaven and earth has through his abundant mercy and great love for mankind given us Jesus Christ to be our Saviour and Redeemer, that we
might be reconciled to God through Him, we feel it our indispensable duty to follow the principles of the teachings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We consider Him our teacher and pattern. Therefore, since we have received this wonderful ministry, having obtained mercy, we take this method of setting forth what we understand to be a God accepted rule to govern the church. We hold the holy scriptures as contained in the Old and New Testaments as our rule of faith and practice in accordance with the principles of the Church of God in Christ, whose faith is founded upon the Apostles’ doctrine as received on the day of Pentecost.

Many thousand people from other denominations and from families void of Christian teaching are gathering into our churches continually. Many of them come with little or no knowledge of the doctrine. Therefore, if they are to be useful in the Kingdom of God, they will need the instruction as to the doctrine of Christ.

Hence, this volume should be found in the home of every member of the Church of God in Christ. And more so, because it contains doctrines maintained and observed by the New Testament Church.
HISTORY

In the year 1895, Elders C. P. Jones, C. H. Mason and others, while searching the scriptures, saw that they could not be saved without holiness. They were sanctified through the truth and began to preach this doctrine to their hearers. Because of such doctrine they were ejected from the Baptist Church. Later in that year those same brethren congregated themselves and were known to be the Church of God Acts 20:28; I Cor. 1:2; 10:32; II Cor. 1:1; I Tim. 3:5-15. But because the truth of the gospel was being assailed on every side, and many false doctrines were being introduced by those who proclaimed the name but denied the power thereof; Elder C. H. Mason, being set forth to defend the Gospel, prayed earnestly for a name that would not depart from the scriptures and at the same time distinguish the true followers from the false. Therefore, in the year 1897 while walking along a certain street in Little Rock, Ark., the Lord revealed this name, “The Church of God in Christ”, with the following scriptures to support it: I Thes. 2:14 - “For ye brethren became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye have suffered like things of your own countrymen even as they have of the Jews”; II Thes. 1:1—“Paul and Silvanus
and Timotheus unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”; Gal. 1:22—“And was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ.”

This union lasted until the year 1906, when a great revival was held in Los Angeles, Calif., under the auspices of Elder W. J. Seymour. Elder C. H. Mason, among many others, attended this revival and received the baptism of the Holy Ghost with signs of speaking with other tongues according to Act 2:4—“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance.”

He came back preaching this as a New Testament doctrine, to which many of the brethren were averse. In August, 1907, the general assembly convened at Jackson, Miss., with Elder C. P. Jones presiding as General Overseer, who was also averse to the so-called new doctrine promulgated by Elder C. H. Mason and others. After a very lengthy discussion, the assembly withdrew from C. H. Mason and all who promulgated the doctrine of speaking with tongues the right hand of fellowship.

Later in the same year, Elder C. H. Mason called a meeting in Memphis, Tenn., of all the ministers who believed in receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost according to the scriptures Acts 2:4. Among the group of Elders who responded to this great call were E.

These brethren formed the first General Assembly of the Church of God in Christ, whose faith was founded upon the doctrine of the Apostles as received on the day of Pentecost. The Lord gave Elder C. H. Mason to be the Chief Apostle, to which the whole assembly accepted. Under his leadership the Church has witnessed a great triumph and growth.

In the year of 1933, five overseers were consecrated to the office of Bishop by the laying on of hands of Senior Bishop and assisted by the prayers of the Overseers and Elders and the General Convocation.

Those consecrated to the office of Bishop were namely, Bishop I. S. Stafford, Detroit, Mich. (deceased); Bishop E. M. Page, Dallas, Tex. (deceased); Bishop W. M. Roberts, Chicago, Ill.; Bishop O. T. Jones, Philadelphia, Pa., and Bishop R. F. Williams, Cleveland, Ohio.
THE CONSTITUTION

CERTIFIED COPY OF AMENDMENT TO CHARTER OF INCORPORATION OF THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST

WE, THE MINISTERS AND MEMBERS of the "Church of God in Christ" who hold the Holy Scriptures as contained in the Old and New Testaments as our rule of faith and practice, in accordance with the principles of our faith and government, do hereby amend and modify our charter, to wit:—

(Article 1 — Change of Name)

That the corporate name of the incorporation be changed from the "General Board of the Church of God in Christ of America" to "Church of God in Christ."

(Article 2 — Senior Bishop)

Nothing in this constitution shall operate to deprive Elder C. H. Mason, 1121 Miss. Ave., Memphis, Tenn., the present Chief Apostle, Founder and Senior Bishop, of the authority he now holds as Chief Apostle of the Church of God in Christ.
(Article 3 — Local Churches)

The membership of the local church shall consist of all who have been set in order as a church by those authorized so to do, after having declared their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior, and their belief in our doctrines, and their willingness to submit to our government. Local churches may be set in order by the Bishop having jurisdiction, or an elder authorized by him.

(Article 4 — Disorganization of Churches)

When it seems clear to a Bishop that a church set in order should not continue as such it may be disorganized by action and formal notice of the Board of Bishops. In case a local church becomes disorganized any such property that exists may in no way be diverted to other purposes but shall pass to the control of the State Board for the use of the Church at large as the State Board shall direct, and the trustees holding such property for the disorganized church, shall sell or dispose of the same only on order, and under the direction of the appointed agent of the state board and turn over such funds to said agent.

No board of trustees may divert property from the use of the "Church of God in Christ". No board of trustees shall refuse the pulpit or the use of a local "Church of God in Christ" for religious or other purposes to a duly authorized officer of the General Assembly or their representatives.
(Article 5 — Withdrawal of Churches)

No local church may withdraw as a body from the "Church of God in Christ" or in any way sever its relation thereto except by provision of the General Assembly.

(Article 6 — Credentials of Delegates)

Secretaries of the several State Assemblies shall furnish certificates of elections to the delegates severally elected to the General Assembly, and shall also send a certificate of such election to the General Secretary of the Church.

(Article 7 — The General Assembly)

The General Assembly is the only doctrine expressing and law making authority of the Church. The General Assembly shall be composed of the ordained elders, the General Secretary, the General Treasurer and such lay delegation as the General Assembly may prescribe.

The General Assembly shall meet annually at the time and place designated by the Board of Bishops. The General Assembly shall elect by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting two or more Bishops who shall hold office during good behavior, and shall have general supervision of the Church, and who shall compose the board of Bishops — provided however that Elder C. H. Mason, the pres-
ent Senior Bishop shall retain his present power and authority during his life time, but upon his death said authority shall revert to the board of Bishops.

The General Assembly shall elect a general board composed of ten members who shall be the trustees in trust for the corporation, and shall compose the board of Home and Foreign Missions, Publication, Church Extension, Education and Ministerial Relief. Said board shall transact all business affairs of the Church, and any other matters that may properly come before it subject to the approval of the General Assembly; provided, however, that all policies and plans of operation must have the approval of the board of Bishops.

Said board shall be presided over by one of the Bishops. The General Assembly shall be presided over by the Bishops jointly and severally. The General Assembly shall elect its other officers, and organize itself for the transaction of its business according to its wisdom and pleasure.

The General Assembly shall elect a General Secretary who shall hold office during good behavior, and who shall be the secretary of the General Assembly and the board of Bishops. The General Assembly shall elect a General Treasurer who shall hold office during good behavior.

The General Assembly shall elect a lot from among the male elders of the Church as many
bishops as it may deem necessary, who shall hold office during good behavior, and who shall constitute the board of Bishops, provided, however, that they shall be appointed by the present Senior Bishop during his life time, but upon his decease they shall be elected by the General Assembly as provided in this constitution.

(Article 8 — Extra Session of the General Assembly)

The board of Bishops or a majority thereof shall have the power to call an extra session of the General Assembly in case of emergency and to fix the time and place thereof.

(Article 9 — Powers and Restrictions of the General Assembly)

The power and authority of the General Assembly to legislate for the Church, to make such rules and regulations over all the departments as it may deem best is limited by the following restrictions:

(1) It shall not set aside or change any of our articles of faith nor shall it establish any new doctrines contrary to the doctrines that now exist in the church.

(2) The General Assembly shall not abolish our representative form of government, nor the General superintendency, nor deprive it of any of the authority given it by this constitution.
OF GOD IN CHRIST

No person shall be seated in the General Assembly who has not been duly elected as a delegate or an alternate by a recognized state Assembly of the Church of God in Christ.

The General Assembly shall not deprive our ministers or members of a fair and orderly trial on an appeal in case of conviction.

Article 10 — Rules of order of the General Assembly)

The General Assembly shall adopt rules of order governing its manner of organization, procedure, committees, and all other matter pertaining to the conduct of its business. It shall be the judge of the elections and qualifications of its own members.

Article 11 — Bishops of the Church of God in Christ)

The Bishops shall have general supervision of the Church of God in Christ. The Bishops jointly and severally shall preside over the General Assembly. One Bishop shall preside over the general board of the church. One Bishop shall preside over each state assembly, or should he be providentially hindered shall make arrangements for such presidency. The Bishops with such elders as they shall appoint shall ordain those who have been elected to be Elders. The Bishops may organize, re-
organize, or disorganize local churches. The Bishop presiding over the State Assembly shall assign pastors to the several charges within the bounds of his jurisdiction.

The Bishops may appoint District Superintendents over the several districts within their jurisdiction. The Bishop presiding over the General Assembly shall decide all questions of order subject to an appeal to the General Assembly, but all questions of law shall be decided by the General Assembly.

Article 12 — Board of Bishops

The Bishops shall organize as a board and shall arrange for and assign to the members thereof the work over which they shall have special jurisdiction. The Board of Bishops shall have supervision of all boards and the plans adopted by any board must have the approval of the Board of Bishops.

The Board of Bishops shall constitute a board to arrange courses of study for licensed ministers. The Board of Bishops shall have the power to do anything else in the service of the church not otherwise provided for according to their wisdom and in harmony with the constitution of the Church.

(Article 13 — The General Board)

The General Board shall be composed of members as follows:
The General Secretary, General Treasurer,
and five or more members elected by the General Assembly to serve until the final adjournment of the next General Assembly. A member of the Board of Bishops shall preside over the General Boards.

(Article 14 — Trustees of local churches)

All the trustees of local church property shall be members of the "Church of God in Christ". In all cases where the law requires a special mode of election of church trustees that mode shall be strictly followed. Where no particular mode of election is required by law the trustees shall be elected by ballot at the annual meeting of the church or a meeting called for that purpose, announcement for such meeting having been given.

Before real estate is purchased for the use of the local church the trustees shall see that the church in all places where the law will permit, is incorporated, and that the articles of incorporation shall provide that the local church be subject to the government of the "Church of God in Christ" as from time to time authorized and declared by the General Assembly of said church and that the business affairs of the church shall be managed by a Board of Trustees elected and organized according to the provisions of said government.

Such articles shall further provide that such corporation shall have power to acquire, hold, sell, and convey property both real and per-
sonal. When this is done all property acquired shall be deeded directly to the church in its corporate name. It is required that all deeds conveying property shall contain the following clause:

In trust that said premises shall be maintained and disposed of as a place of worship for the ministry and membership of the "Church of God in Christ", subject to the doctrines, law and usage of said church as from time to time declared by the General Assembly of said church.

In no case may the trustees mortgage or encumber the real estate to meet the current expenses of the church, and they may in no case transfer the real estate of the Church without the written consent of the church, and the written consent of the Bishop having jurisdiction. For their faithfulness to their trust they shall be amenable to the local church to which they shall make annual report.

(Article 15 — Trials)

Deacons of the local church shall be appointed and removed by the pastor. Local churches may be tried and disorganized in the manner as hereinafter set forth, when charged with any of the following offenses and found guilty.

Persistently violating the provisions of the
law enacted by the General Assembly, or refusing to conform to the legal requirements of the constituted authorities of the church. Sustaining and supporting a pastor who teaches doctrines contrary to the articles of faith of our church.

Sanctioning immoral practices by members and refusing to take legal steps prescribed by the constitution for the trial of persons charged with the commission of such offenses.

When any local church by official act or declaration or by non-performance of any of the official duties imposed upon it by the government of this church as found in our constitution, or by-laws, shall offend in any of the foregoing particulars, any member of such church, with the consent of the Bishop having jurisdiction, may file a complaint with the state board charging that such church has committed one or more of the foregoing offenses; thereupon the state board may appoint a court of five elders to summons witnesses, to hear evidence on behalf of the prosecution, and the defense, and to render judgment in the case.

Twenty days before the trial of such church, the time of which shall be fixed by the court, written notice shall be served upon the church board of the church against which complaint is made, such notice shall give the time and place of such trial, and shall contain a correct copy of the complaint and other charges stated therein.
The church so charged shall have the right to be represented by counsel at the trial, such counsel to be a member in good standing, of the "Church of God in Christ." The state board shall appoint an elder of the church to conduct the prosecution.

In case the church so charged shall be found guilty by the court, it shall be disorganized by the Board of Bishops, unless it satisfies the members of the board that it repents of the evil way, and will conform to the government and faith of our church, and recognize the constituted authorities of the church.

All members of churches convicted as above who repent or disclaim their guilt of the offenses for which said church may be disorganized, shall be entitled to letters of good standing by the Bishop, and may unite with other churches of our faith and order.

Members of the local church shall be tried by the pastor and the local church, with the right of appeal to the state board, whose decision shall be final. An ordained Elder shall be tried by the state board with the right of appeal to the General Council.

All charges against an Elder shall be in writing, signed by his accuser or accusers. He shall be allowed counsel, which counsel shall be a member of the "Church of God in Christ"; should the counsel be guilty of improper conduct the court may refuse to hear him, and
also punish him. In case the Elder so accused be found guilty by the unanimous judgment of the court, after having been tried according to the rules of evidence, judgment shall be pronounced. Such judgment may take the form of expulsion from the church and ministry, or that of suspension for a limited time from his membership and ministry.

The trial of a Bishop shall be that of an Elder with these exceptions: He shall be tried before the General Council with the appeal to the General Assembly. All trials shall be held according to the following scriptures:—Deut. 17:6, 1 Tim. 5:19, 2nd Cor. 13:1.

(Article 16 — Local Ministers)

A member of a local church to be licensed to preach must first be recommended to the Bishop having jurisdiction by his pastor and the church of which he is a member. Only an ordained minister may administer water baptism or the ordinances of the church.

A licensed minister shall be tried by the pastor and church of which he is a member, with the right of appeal to the Bishop or state board.

(Article 17 — Political Governments)

We believe that governments are God given institutions for the benefit of mankind. We admonish and exhort our members to honor
magistrates, and the powers that be, and to respect and obey the civil laws.

We hereby and herewith declare our loyalty to the President and the Constitution of the United States and pledge fidelity to the flag for which the Republic stands, but as God-fearing, peace-loving and law-abiding people, we only claim our inheritance as American citizens namely: to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience.

We believe that the shedding of human blood, or the taking of human life to be contrary to the teachings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and as a body we are averse to war in all its forms.

(Article 18 --- Amendments to the Constitution)

The provisions of this constitution may be altered or amended by two-thirds majority vote of all the members of the General Assembly present and voting, with the exception of sections 1, 2 and 3 of article 9 of this constitution. As soon as such alterations, or amendments, shall have been adopted as hereinafore provided, the result of the vote shall be announced by the General Secretary whereupon such alterations, or amendments shall have full force and effect.

Approved. C. H. Mason, Senior Bishop
Attest: U. H. Miller, General Secretary

We, the undersigned, comprising
the Board of Directors of the General Board of the Church of God in Christ, of America, apply to the state of Tennessee, by virtue of the general laws of the land for an amendment to said charter of incorporation.

WITNESS our hands this 29th day of December, 1926.

Bishop C. H. Mason
Bishop E. M. Page
Bishop W. M. Roberts
Bishop O. T. Jones
Bishop R. F. Williams
Elder U. E. Miller, Rec. Secretary
Elder W. G. Shipman, Cor. Secretary
Elder A. M. Cohen, Treasurer
RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were adopted by the General Council and approved by Bishop C. H. Mason.

Article I. No one shall be permitted to serve on more than two Committees in one session of the National Convocation. That will depend upon conditions and the endorsement of the General Assembly of the Ministers, Bishops, and the approval of the Senior Bishop.

Article II. No one will be permitted to hold more than two National Offices at any one time. That will depend upon conditions, endorsements of the General Assembly of Bishops, Overseers, Pastors and approval of the Senior Bishop.

Article III. No overseer shall preside over more than one State, and pastor more than one church at the same time, where there are ten or more churches in said State. That will depend upon the condition of the case and the approval of the Senior Bishop and his appointment.

Article IV. The State Convocations do reserve the right to protest against any assessments levied upon them within the States which are in excess of the regular current assessments or not pertinent to the District, State or National Work.

Article V. That our National monies be budgeted in percentage form, according to numerical strength and the conditions of the State, to meet the needs of the General Church.

Article VI. That all pastors will pay their tithes
to Bishop Mason, according to the Scriptures.

Article VII. An Auditing Committee shall audit the books of the National Treasurer and all Departments and make a written report of their findings. A copy to be supplied each member of the General Council.

Article VIII. That all monies, whether solicited or budgeted for National purposes shall be reported and centralized into the National Work.

Article IX. No assessment shall be assigned from any Department of the General Church, without the approval of the General Council of Bishops, Overseers and Ministers with endorsement of Senior Bishop.

Article X. Resolved that whereas it is necessary to have and to participate with the Women and their Department, it is necessary also to seek a better understanding. Resolved that all monies raised in the Department or Auxiliaries under the jurisdiction of the Women's Department will make prompt and adequate reports to our General Assembly of Bishops, Overseers and Ministers; and that the Auditors will have access to investigate and to make proper inventory and to scrutinize all reports, records and papers pertaining to the National Church Work or the Church of God in Christ.

U. E. Miller, Secretary