

# **SECTION A. TRIALS OF LOCAL CHURCHES**

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## **1 Offenses for which a Church may be tried are as follows:**

- (a) Persistently violating the provisions of the Charter, Constitution and Rules, Laws and Regulations of the Church Of God In Christ, or its Articles of Faith.
- (b) Sustaining and supporting a Pastor who teaches or practices doctrines contrary to or repugnant to the Articles of Faith of the Church Of God In Christ.
- (c) Sanctioning immoral practices of members and failing or refusing to take steps prescribed by the Constitution and By-Laws of the Church for trial of members charged with the commission of the foregoing offenses.

## **2. Procedures for trial**

- (a) Any member of a local church, who has just cause to believe that the Church of which he is a member has committed any and all of the offenses enumerated hereinabove, may file a charge against the Church, specifically setting out the acts and things complained of. The original charge shall be filed in the office of the Secretary of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, of which the Church is a part, or with which it is affiliated, and copies thereof shall be filed with the Clerk or Secretary of the local Church and copy thereof shall be filed in the office of the General Secretary.
- (b) The Clerk of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction shall submit the charge to the Jurisdictional Bishop, who shall appoint an Investigating Committee of not less than three (3) nor more than five (5) members to examine the facts and ascertain whether there is reasonable grounds for having the church brought to trial.
- (c) The Investigating Committee shall report its findings and recommendations to the Jurisdictional Bishop. If the Investigating committee determines that there is not merit to the charge and recommends that the charge be dismissed the Jurisdictional Bishop shall thereupon dismiss the charge and send copies of the letter or order of dismissal to the principal parties.
- (d) If, however, the Investigating Committee finds and determines that the church should be tried it shall submit its recommendations to the Jurisdictional Bishop, who shall appoint an Ecclesiastical Council consisting of five (5) Pastors of the Jurisdiction to determine the merits of the complaint Said Council shall give written notice to all interested parties and to the General Secretary of the time and place of the hearing at

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least twenty (20) days prior to the time the Ecclesiastical Council sets the cause down for trial

(e) The Parties shall base the right to be represented by Counsel, who shall be members of the Church Of God In Christ, but said Counsel may be advised by non-members of the Church.

(f) The majority decision of the Ecclesiastical Council shall be necessary to sustain the charges.

(g) In the event the charges are not sustained, the complaint shall be dismissed. But if the charges are sustained, the Council shall render its judgment or decision as follows:

(1) It may order that the Church be placed on probation, or

(2) It may order or recommend that the Church be given an opportunity to repent of its evil ways and agree to conform to the government and faith of the Church, recognize the Constitutional authorities of the Church, and specifically refrain from committing, in the future, any of the acts embraced in the charges; or

(3) It may order that the Church be reorganized; or

(4) It may order that the Church be disorganized or

(5) It may order that the Pastor be suspended or removed from office; or

(6) It may take such other orders or decisions as it may determine to be for the best interest of the Church Of God In Christ.

(h) The Jurisdictional Bishop shall execute the orders and decrees of the Ecclesiastical Council

(i) If and in the event a Church is disorganized its property, real and personal shall pass to the Trustees of the Ecclesiastical Assembly and the officers of said church, or Trustees thereof, who have the legal right to convey title, shall execute a Deed of Conveyance wherein the legal title to said property shall be vested in the Trustees of the Ecclesiastical Assembly, in trust, for the use and benefit of the members of the Church Of God In Christ in the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of the Church: but said Trustees shall not dispose of said property except by and with the written consent of the Jurisdictional Bishop and the Trustees of the General Church.