

Join The Journey

Discipleship and Membership Class



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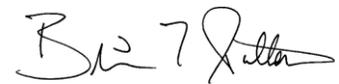




Dear Friend:

I am so excited that you have made a decision to participate in *Join the Journey*—the discipleship and membership information course of the Peerless Road Church! We believe that God has called our church to: REACH the lost, CONNECT the disconnected, GROW to become more like Christ, and SERVE God through serving others. This course is designed to make you familiar with God’s mission and vision for the Peerless Road Church and equip you to be part of the ministries of our church.

As you go through the pages of this course, it is my prayer that the Holy Spirit will speak to you about what part you can play in the ministries of the Peerless Road Church. Thank you for taking the time to learn more about us and all that God is doing at our church. I love you and I’m glad that you are here!



Brian T. Sutton
Lead Pastor
Peerless Road Church





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Part 1 : reach connect grow serve

Our Mission:

We will REACH up to God and REACH out to those who do not know Christ with the message of the gospel.

**“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age”
(Matthew 28:19-20, TNIV).**



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“Called to Reach”

Pastor Brian Sutton

¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:19-20, TNIV).

As Jesus was preparing to leave His disciples, He spends what feels like that “last few moments” with them. He uses words that we could imagine a person on his death bed might use to his friends or his children. Those “last words” would be some of the most important words that He had ever spoken to those disciples and to the church, His body. While He was with them on earth, Jesus had revealed everything to his disciples that they could receive. He had broken open to them the fulfillment of prophecies and the hope of this world through His life, His death, and His resurrection. He had revealed to them that He was God in the flesh, God Immanuel, God literally “with them.” They had seen and experienced many wonderful things, while in the company of Jesus. They had seen him literally raise the dead, but they had also watched as He was beaten and crucified. All hope seemed lost for them after his death, only now to see all hope restored at His resurrection. Now for Jesus, it was time to go. He had told them previously in ***John 14:1-3, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ² My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”*** It was now His time to go. It was time to leave them and return to the Father, but it was important that He share with them their commission. He had given them the great commandments in ***Matthew 22:37-39: ³⁷ Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’*** Now he was giving them (and us) the great commission. A commission is like a calling. The master gives instructions to those who are working with Him. We are not only working for God, but you and I are working “with” God. The Apostle Paul called it “Co Laboring” in I Corinthians 3:9. When God says that we must go and do, we have a mandate to heed His call and commission.

There are seven aspects of reaching that we may point out, to help us understand the Biblical principles of the Great Commission.

1. We Are Called To Reach!

Of course this commission that Jesus was giving was extremely important to the life of the church. Every organization, be it a school, family, business or club, must have a purpose, or as the writer called it a VISION. King Solomon describes life without Vision or “Revelation” like this in ***Proverbs 29:18: ¹⁸ “Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint; but blessed is the one who heeds wisdom’s instruction.”*** Jesus was in fact giving the church its commission, its’ Vision for ministry and it was to go. This commission would keep the church alive and give it a sense of purpose. Those who do not have a purpose die. They have no unction and no reason for living. No drive, no reason to get up early and work late. Spiritually, Jesus is setting the church up for its mission, its’ purpose for being. When He said I want you to GO, he was saying I



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want you to go and SHARE what I have shared with you. I have given you life, now I want you to reach out and give this life to others, by sharing the message of the gospel. I have given you peace, so I want you to reach out and show others how to have this same peace. I have given you forgiveness, so I want you to reach out and show others how they can be forgiven. I have given you hope, so I want you to reach out and show others that there is hope for them too! In this commission he said to share, ***“Whatsoever things I have commanded you...”*** All of it! I want you to reach to them and give them what I have given you, and if you will do that, I will be with you! I will be right there along with you reaching out to them.

2. God is Reaching!

Jesus had given some wonderful instructions previously to the disciples. While He was near Jerusalem at the sheep gate pool, called Bethesda, he healed a man on the Sabbath day, who had been unable to walk for 38 years. He upset some of the Jewish Leaders because he told the man to carry His mat on the Sabbath. If you want to get the devil stirred up, just start seeing people saved, healed and delivered and you will! Their response to the man’s healing was against Jesus, but then Jesus gave them powerful words and those words extend to us today. He said in ***John 5:17-21*** ¹⁷“***In his defense Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.”*** ¹⁸ ***For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.*** ¹⁹ ***Jesus gave them this answer: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.*** ²⁰ ***For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed.*** ²¹ ***For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.”***

Jesus said His father was at work in the world. The Father, our Heavenly Father is at work in this world now! Jesus’ commission to the church to go and make disciples was one of great importance. He was really asking the church to come along on this journey and be His hands and feet. To be His hands that reach out to others with the message of the gospel. I believe that God is at work in this world today! I believe that his Spirit is currently hovering of the lost... He is moving on the bruised... He is prompting the oppressed, the “battered” and the lost. I believe that God’s heart is so broken for those in bondage and those who are hurting. Most do not even know that they are lost, they just know that: they are not “found,” and they are not happy, and they are not living in what Jesus called Life to the fullest. I believe that the Holy Spirit is hovering and working in the lives of those people and I believe that the Great Commission of Jesus Christ has called the church to reach out and work along with that Holy Spirit who is currently at work in their lives.

3. Compassion to Reach Comes From the Heart of God

How will we ever shake off the desires and dust of the apathy that can so easily consume us? How will we become a fresh outpouring of compassion and love to this world? How will we ever realize that we are called to go as a church and called to go as individual believers? There is a way, and that way is to first REACH UP to God before that we can ever REACH OUT to man. Jesus said in ***John 15:16***: ¹⁶“***You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you***



might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.” God reached down to us and called us, and we must now respond to Him. We want to be a people who are reaching. We want to be a people who follow the great commission, but no amount of personal encouragement can ever cause us to sustain the kind of “individual power” that it will take to reach this world. We must make it a priority as individuals, and as the church, to first REACH UP to God! When we reach God, we reach his heart. **Matthew 9:35-38** reveals the broken heart of Jesus as it reads: ³⁵ **“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”** Jesus looked at the multitudes and was moved with compassion. The compassion of God allows Him to not only see what we are, but what we can become. When we are broken and hurting for those in pain in this world, THEN we have captured the heart and compassion of God. As God in his wisdom has REACHED DOWN to us with: the extension of grace, hope and forgiveness, we must receive his grace and then be transformed to have the mind of Christ! When we have the mind of Christ, we will have his compassion and longing for he lost to be saved. The Apostle Paul said of Jesus in **Philippians 2:6-8** that He, ⁶ **Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!”** The heart of Christ is and was so broken for lost humanity that he humbled Himself to die on a cross for us. We are called to think and act as Christ. We are commissioned to be the church that is a people who are compassionate and broken for the hurts and needs of the people in this world. We are commissioned to be a body that has touched the heart of God. A Body who is moved with compassion and must REACH out to those around them, just as Christ does.

Luke 14 tells the story of the last supper banquet that is coming. In this parable by Jesus, you can see the heart of the Father and the heart of the son. You can see the direct heartbeat of God to have all people at the table. **Luke 14:16-23...** ¹⁶ **Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. ¹⁷ At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’ ¹⁸ “But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’ ¹⁹ “Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’ ²⁰ “Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’ ²¹ “The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’ ²² “‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’ ²³ “Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.’”**

We see the Master’s words to “Go Out” and “Compel Them.” There was, and is, a longing for the Master to see everyone at the table. This longing heart may have escaped us at times. It’s not that we don’t want them at the table, we just haven’t always seen the need to REACH to them or to COMPEL them to come. The word COMPEL in verse 23 even denotes a feeling of “constrain” to it. Grab them... Drag them... There are certainly pockets of soul winners within



the church, but as a whole we surely see that there is a greater need to allow the Holy Spirit to prompt us in our daily lives to share the gospel and COMPEL the lost to come. Now, in this day, I believe with all my heart that God is calling us to REACH. He is calling us to REACH as a body, to REACH as individuals, and to REACH as families. He is calling us to reach up to God and allow him to baptize us in his sweet compassion, to reach up to God and allow the Holy Spirit to baptize us fresh in the Father’s love. To baptize us in the Holy Spirit, so that we may be equipped to REACH to those on whom the Holy Spirit is now working. It’s your sons, your daughters, your cousins, your aunts, your uncles, your grandparents, your co-workers, your friends and your acquaintances that God is moving upon now. We need only to REACH up and capture the heart of the Father to REACH out to them. We must know that we need to reach out to them with the wonderful message of the gospel. I’m not saying let’s invite people to say a simple pray that we can place them “on the rolls of the church.” Not just ask them to go down and shake hands with a preacher. We need the Holy Spirit to equip us to reach to them with the good news that Jesus REDEEMS us OUT of our sin. He lifts us OUT of our despair.

4. Reach Out With Your Story

When I was a boy, I remember going to church and having what we called a “Testimony Service.” I saw and heard person after person stand in the small country church where I grew up and proclaim, through testimony, what God had done and what he was still doing in their lives. This was their story. Their stories of a life of faithfulness and prayer inspired me as a child and even today! The Bible is written as a story. It’s God’s story for mankind. It’s the story of the power of the love of God and his great love for us. It’s a TRUE story! It’s the story of God sending his Son to redeem and save people from their sins. Let me tell you now that if you know God, **YOU HAVE A STORY**. God has armed you with your own testimony and your testimony is VITAL to your ability to reach out to those around you. I remember an old song that we used to sing that had these words in it, “It is no secret what God can do, what he’s done for others he’ll do for you. With arms wide open, he’ll pardon you. It is no secret what God can do.” I ask you church, will we, as Pentecostals, recapture the power of our “God story” and make our testimony a part of our lives? Will we begin our conversations like, “Can I share with you what God has done for me?” This world doesn’t want to know what you say God did for other people, they want to know what God has done for us, and they want to know if He can do the same for them. But the truth is, we will not share our story, we will not share the gospel and we will just sit on our hands unless we can reach the heart of God and feel His compassion filling our veins... the veins of the body of Christ.

5. We Reach Because Jesus is Coming Soon

The Bible records in 2 Peter Chapter 3, verses 3-4 and 9-11:

³ Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. ⁴ They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.” ⁹ The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. ¹¹ Since



everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives.”

We reach out to man, as a body, because we have limited time. Generations have come and gone since Christ, and still we preach. We preach like the disciples preached, because, like them, we are convinced that our time is short. We preach because we believe that the rapture is coming and we don't want anyone to be left behind.

There are certain types of evangelist activities. If we say a “church” is an evangelistic type church, we often mean that there are activities for evangelism. There are: revivals, worship services, concerts and things to draw a crowd. The Pastor preaches a message and people come down front to be saved. This still happens, but it happens far less often that it used to. Why? Is the preaching less anointed or less effective? Absolutely not! The issue is that all of the folks who need Jesus are out in the world and most of them are not in the church! The church building is a place to connect, grow and serve but it is not the best place to REACH. Reaching happens mostly OUTSIDE of the walls of this building. Reaching is done by the hands of Christ, and that is you and me. Reaching requires just that... REACHING. Imagine the spiritual work of God, as His body reaches DOWN to those who are hurting. We reach as far as we possibly can to pull those in need up to Christ those who need him. The Psalmist said in *Psalm 40:2*, **“He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.”** We will become a church that see conversions weekly, but not only in our altars... but in our schools, in our workplaces and in our homes. We are a people who will reach out with our story of how we have been delivered from the bondage of sin and so can those to whom we share.

6. Reaching Requires Holiness

Since we are reaching to those who are broken and bruised, we must be moved with compassion to do so, but we must also understand that God has called us to be holy. Reaching requires holiness! We must have what someone wants, if we want to share. If we are reaching out to the lost, telling them our story, and the story of the gospel, telling them that Jesus comes to transform us and free us from a life of sinfulness, and the gospel story does not match our life, it's like offering them poison. However, when we sense the Spirit of God moving in the life (and He is) of that lost person, and we sense that God is dealing with them through His Spirit we can become excited! Let me just say here how important prayer is to our strategy to reach. I believe that as we pray together for the lost we will see results! Praying is critical to reaching! You take that person, that lost person who has been soaked in prayer, they have been massaged with prayer, they have been fasted over and cried over in prayer... and you just let someone come to them who has lived an abundant life before them, a life that is “counter cultural” and you let them tell their story or testimony of what God has done for them and you let them tell the gospel that Jesus loves them so much he died... not just to forgive and accept them but to FREE them from sin and transform them... You let that happen and we will see people come to Jesus Christ!



7. Reaching Requires Anointing

I believe that in the last two weeks you and I have come in contact with someone who needs to hear the gospel, and probably someone that God is “working on.” This “reaching commission” by Jesus is very serious. We read **Luke 24:45-49**, and we see how the Pentecostal writer Luke, caught the important words of Jesus to the disciples...⁴⁵ **“Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.”**⁴⁶ **He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”**⁴⁸ **You are witnesses of these things.**⁴⁹ **I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”** The equipping of the Spirit for the believers was so important that they were commanded to wait for this equipping before they shared the message. Following the leading of the Spirit, and living a life in the Spirit, is extremely important to us as we endeavor to REACH others with the gospel. The bondage and strongholds that have captured and hold the lost can only be broken by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, we are not just talking about a rescue mission we are talking about a restoration mission! Following and moving under the anointing is not just something that we do in preaching, but it is something we do in our daily lives, as the Spirit moves and leads us to those in need, and as the Spirit empowers us to share the gospel message with them.

We must first reach up to God that he may transform our hearts and give us hearts of compassion for the lost, that we may then REACH them with the love of Jesus Christ. We must be equipped by the Holy Spirit as we do this “end time pronouncement” of the gospel. When the Holy Spirit equips us, he also puts a fire in us. **Jeremiah 20:9** reads, **“⁹ But if I say, “I will not mention his word or speak anymore in his name,” his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.”** Coming in contact with God, and His Spirit, is what ignites a fire in us and causes us to be “compelled to compel”. We are transformed into servants who have been commissioned to go into the highway and hedges and compel them to come in, “that my house may be filled!” It is this inspiration of the Holy Spirit that caused the once fearful Apostle Peter, who even denied he knew Christ, to REACH DOWN to the lame man sitting at the temple gate in **Acts chapter 3:1-10** **“One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. ² Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. ³ When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. ⁴ Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” ⁵ So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. ⁶ Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” ⁷ Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. ⁸ He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. ⁹ When all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰ they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.”**

Something happens when we cooperate with a God who is already at work, and reach out to those in whom he is working! We don’t have to be afraid. He said that as we fulfill the great commission, He was with us to the ends of the earth. Can we come today to touch the heart of God that He may fill us with His compassion and equip us with His Spirit to REACH those around us who are lost?



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I. Reach

A. That You May Know

Since we are commissioned to share the “good news” of Christ, we should be equipped to reach those around us and be confident of what Christ has done in our own lives.

John wrote his first epistle to enable believers in Christ to have assurance of their salvation. “**These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the son of God; that ye may KNOW that ye have eternal life**” (I John 5:13). This letter gives us at least six criteria by which we can be certain that we are Christians. Please read the following verses and complete the sentence for each:

I John 1:7. I know that I am a Christian if _____

I John 1:9. I know that I am a Christian if _____

I John 2:3. I know I am a Christian if _____

I John 3:9. I know I am a Christian if _____

I John 3:14. I know I am a Christian if _____

I John 5:10. I know I am a Christian if _____



B. The Fruit of Salvation

When you become a new creature in Christ, your life changes in significant ways. The following Scriptures describe different kinds of “fruit” resulting from salvation—what Christ produces in you that is observable to others. Please read these verses and answer the questions that follow:

1. Matthew 28:19; I Peter 3:21

What action can believers take that provides external evidence of salvation? _____

Why is this action important? _____

2. Galatians 5:22-23

List the nine characteristics of Christ which the Holy Spirit produces in believers.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

(5) _____

(6) _____

(7) _____

(8) _____

(9) _____

Which of those characteristics do you feel is most evident in your life? _____

In which do you have the most room to grow? _____



II. The Story Only You Can Tell

To attract consumers to a product, advertisements often show living proof that it works. Since you belong to Jesus, YOU are the LIVING PROOF of His power to change lives. You have a unique testimony—it’s your Jesus Story. It’s a story that only you can tell.

“...Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have” (1 Peter 3:15, NIV). The following exercise will help you get prepared to share your story.

WHO YOU ARE—B.C. AND A.D.:

The cross of Jesus is the dividing line in human history. Events are dated either B.C. (before Christ) or A.D. (after Christ). The personal history of His followers can also be divided into two chapters—

B.C.—Their life before they began a relationship with Jesus.

A.D.—Their life after Christ came in.

Please complete the following sheet labeled “My Story” using the following three steps:

Step 1: WHO I WAS B.C. (THE OLD ME)

Write one or two paragraphs to describe yourself before you were saved.

Step 2: THE TURNING POINT

Describe what happened when you began your relationship with Jesus. What made you realize that he was the answer? What exactly did you do?

Step 3: WHO I AM A.D. (THE NEW ME)

Describe how you are different since Jesus is living in you. How are your attitudes, your behaviors, and your relationships impacted? Explain how you are growing and changing because Christ is in your life?

THE NEXT PAGE IS YOUR “MY STORY” PAGE.



My Story . . .

Who I was B.C. (Before Christ)

The Turning Point (When I met Christ)

Who I was A.D. (After Christ)



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Now that you have written your “story,” please review this simple three-step process that will help equip you to REACH your friends and family with the message that Jesus loves them and died to give them eternal life.

Step One: Your Personal Testimony, “My Story”

- **WHO I WAS (THE OLD ME)**

Write one or two paragraphs to describe yourself before you were saved.

- **THE TURNING POINT**

Describe what happened when you began your relationship with Jesus. What made you realize that He was the answer? What exactly did you do?

- **WHO I AM NOW (THE NEW ME)**

Describe how you are different since Jesus is living in you. How are your attitudes, your behaviors, and your relationships impacted? Explain how you are growing and changing because Christ is in your life?

Step Two: The Power of the Gospel to Save (Romans 1:16)

- **John 3:16 (Coin Illustration)**

We all like to think about God’s love. Religions have been built on God’s love alone, but God is like a coin (use a coin if you have one). On one side there is heads and on the other side there is tails. If I laid this coin on a table and tried to pick up only one side without the other side, it would be impossible. I couldn’t do it, no matter how hard I tried. It is the same with God. We cannot take only His love for us without His justice. He and His character cannot be separated. He loves us, yet He is a just God and will allow no sin in His heaven.

- **Romans 3:23 (Three-Sins-a-Day Illustration)**

Suppose a person sinned only ten times a day, or even five, or even just three! Why, he would practically be a walking angel! Imagine, if no more often than three times a day he thought unkind thoughts, lost his temper, or failed to do what he ought toward God and man, he would be a pretty fine person, would he not? Even if he were this good, he would still have over 1,000 transgressions a year! If he lived to be 70 years old, he would have 70,000 violations of the law of God on his record. Think what would happen to a habitual offender in a criminal court with 70,000 transgressions on his record.



- **Romans 6:23 (Saddest Verse Illustration)**

What would you say is the saddest verse in the Bible? To me, the saddest verse is Matthew 7:22. There was a man talking to God and he must have been answering the same question that we were talking about a moment ago, the question about what would you tell God. He had many great things to say: he had prophesied in God’s name, he had cast out demons, and he had done many marvelous works. (Now I don’t have all of those to tell God, do you?) Everyone who lived around this man must have thought that he was a mighty worker for God. Surely God would let him into heaven. But it is almost shocking to read the next verse (verse 23) and see what God said to him. He said, “Depart from me, you that work iniquity.” That man had done many works for God, but he had missed the whole point. I don’t know what power he had used. I only know that he was deceived. His great works could not get him into heaven. He had substituted works for confessing his great sins in repentance and receiving forgiveness, mercy, and eternal life. If his deeds were of no value to him, then we must not trust ours for eternal life.

- **Acts 3:19 (Blotted Out and “It is Finished” Illustrations)**

Blotted Out: *The word repentance in this verse is very important. To repent is like the military term, “about face.” It means that you are headed one direction, then you do an “about face” and begin going in the opposite direction. When you repent, it means that you have turned from your old life and turned to a new life in Christ.*

Another beautiful phrase right in that verse is, “Your sins may be blotted out.” That phrase makes me think of a child’s blackboard. They can write on that board and completely cover it over with chalk, then I can simply take an eraser and wipe it all away. The child is then ready to write again with a clean board.

My life was like that. I had written disobedience, rebellion, apathy, selfishness and a host of other sins across my life. They were there; no matter how hard I tried to do right, they wouldn’t disappear. One day, just like that verse states, Christ wiped away all those marks of sin from my life. He gave me a fresh new power and purpose for living. I know that phrase is true because it happened for me.

“It is Finished”: *Suppose this book is the record book of all my sins before Christ redeemed me. (Use a small Bible or any other book.) Now it would probably be a much larger book than this. Probably like an encyclopedia! God loves me (point to hand), but God hates my sin (point to book) and must punish it. He cannot have a relationship with me because of my sin. It literally separates me from Him (Isaiah 59:1).*

But God has a solution. He sent Jesus Christ His only Son into this world to become a man (hold out other hand for Jesus). He was all God and all man. Finally, He was nailed on a cross to die. The Bible says (Isaiah 53:6), “All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way (raise hand a little—the hand with the book), and the Lord hath LAID ON HIM the iniquity of us all (lay the book on the hand symbolizing our sin on Christ).



As Christ hung there with the sin of the entire world for all time on His shoulders, the Bible says He was wounded and bruised more than any man (Isaiah 50:6; 52:14; 53:6). Hanging there, He said something important for all of us, the words, “It is Finished” or “Tetelestai” in the Greek language. That was used in the common marketplace every day. When one man completed a trade with another, they would begin the contract with this word, “tetelestai.” It meant paid in full. So when Christ said that word on the cross and died, it meant that now the price had been paid in full for all the sins of the world. He gave His blood, His body, and His life to pay the price for our sin. Paid in full!

- **John 1:12 (The Chair Illustration)**

You do believe that this chair exists, don’t you? (Point to empty chair.) Do you believe that it would hold you up? It is not holding you up now because of one simple reason—you are not sitting on it. (Let the chair represent Jesus Christ.) For a long time I believed He existed and could help me, but I did not have eternal life, because I was trusting my own good works to get me into heaven.

Do you remember what you said you would say to God if He asked you why He should let you into heaven? You said, “I try to do the best I can.” Who is the only person referred to in your answer? (ME.) Who then are you trusting to get you into heaven? (ME.) To receive eternal life, you must transfer your trust from yourself to Christ. (Sit in empty chair.)

Step Three: The Prayer (Example)

- Would you like to pray with me to receive the promise of eternal life?

“Oh Lord, I realize that I am a sinner. Be merciful to me. I repent of my sins now and believe You are my Savior. Please forgive me for all of my wrongs, for I acknowledge You as my Lord. Take me now and make me Your child. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”







Part 2: reach connect grow serve

Our Mission:

We will CONNECT people to PRC for love, ministry, care, and growth.

“But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body” (1 Corinthians 12:18-19, NIV).

I. What It Means to Connect

A. Our creator designed us to live in relationship with others. In His infinite wisdom, Christ left a pattern for His followers to be joined together.

“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Romans 12:5).

There are many benefits to being a member of the body of Christ. Please read the following scriptures and complete the statement for each:

1. Membership identifies a person as a genuine _____.
Romans 12:5; Ephesians 2:19.
2. Membership provides spiritual family to _____ and _____ you in your walk with Christ.
Galatians 6:1-2; Hebrews 10:24-25.
3. Membership gives you a place to discover and use your _____ in _____.
1 Corinthians 12:4-27.
4. Membership places you under the spiritual _____ of godly leaders.
Acts 20:28-29; Hebrews 13:17.
5. Membership gives you the _____ you need to grow.
Ephesians 4:12, 13.



B. A Christian without a church is like:

1. A football player without a _____.
2. A soldier without a _____.
3. A tuba player without a _____.
4. A sheep without a _____.

C. What You Can Expect From Your Church

From our Core Values and Mission Statement, we commit the following to those who choose to be members of the Peerless Road Church:

1. **A loving place to _____:** Recognizing our most basic human need to belong, we are committed to the provision and cultivation of an atmosphere in which people are welcomed, respected, and loved. Lifelong relationships are developed from the foundation of shared values and purpose. Church activities foster these friendships by offering opportunities for Christians to fellowship and grow together.
2. **A commitment to the _____ of the faith:** We are committed to the doctrinal principles on which the Christian faith was built. In summary, these include the belief in Jesus Christ as the Incarnate Son of God, who was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin, was resurrected in victory over sin and death, and is coming again. Jesus Christ is the focus of our faith and worship.
3. **A positive _____:** We believe that proclaiming the positive message of His grace empowers Christians to live consistent with His precepts. Therefore, we cultivate “an inviting, Spirit-filled atmosphere” which focuses on praise, worship, prayer, and relevant biblical teaching and preaching.
4. **Ministry to the _____:** We are committed to encouraging and strengthening the family unit. This commitment is reflected in pastoral ministry to children and youth, impacting lives at their most crucial time of development. Couples retreats are scheduled to enrich marriages, and activities for seniors will target their special needs.
5. **Pastoral Care:** When difficult circumstances occur, such as illness or loss, the pastoral staff is available to walk alongside you and provide spiritual nurturing and encouragement.



6. **A _____ for financial contributions within the community, the state, and around the globe.** Our church is not introverted in our purpose or our use of resources. Our church family generously gives to missions at three levels:

- a. **Local:** Through the Peerless Road Outreach Ministry.
- b. **State:** As God directs, we have provided assistance to other congregations within the state, as well as our support of camping ministries.
- c. **Global:** Through the Harvest Partners connection, our church connects to a specific mission field abroad. The local church sends contributions to our Harvest Partner, via the International Offices, where our gifts are converted to the appropriate currency and forwarded to the church officials in that nation. Area presbyters and International Offices personnel also administer an accountability system appropriate for each area of the world.

The international level of the Church of God of Prophecy provides a global network of support and interaction for the church's ministries in the United States and abroad.

7. **Opportunities for Service.** In order to grow in your relationship with Christ, you need to be actively involved in some form of ministry. We offer you those opportunities; whether through one of the existing ministries or by collaborating on new ministries where God may be leading you. Other ministry opportunities at our church that reach out into the local community include:

- Youth Ministry
- Children’s Ministry (Nursery and Preschool, Christmas Extravaganza)
- Men’s Ministry
- Women’s Ministry
- Audio/Visual Ministry
- Missions Ministry
- Outreach Ministry (The Storehouse Food Ministry, Benevolence, and Transitional Housing, etc.)
- Sunday School/Education
- Chaplain Ministry
- Connect Groups
- Intercessory Prayer Ministry
- Hospitality Ministry
- Various Projects and Ministries (Prison Ministry, Operation Shoebox, etc.)
- Help Ministry (Greeters, Ushers, Parking Lot Attendants, etc.)

To volunteer to serve, or for more information about serving, send an email to serve@peerlessroadchurch.com



II. Meet Our Staff Leadership

Providing visionary, spiritual leadership for the church is the responsibility of the lead pastor, who is appointed by the state overseer of the Church of God of Prophecy in Tennessee in consultation with the local church.

Ministry Participation

The priesthood of all believers is the biblical doctrine that all believers have been given for priestly access to the Father and are given priestly roles. These roles are expressed through ministry to one another in the body of Christ. Ministry is one of the best ways to gain a real sense of contribution and connection to the church as a whole. Listed on the following pages are the various ministries and leadership of our church.

Lead Pastor Brian Sutton

The lead pastor directly oversees the ministries of the local church, which include a leadership team of pastoral staff and administrative staff, Counseling Ministries, Prayer Ministries, Finance and Administrative Committee, Deacon Committee, Missions Committee, Leadership Development, and interns. The lead pastors of the local churches in the Church of God of Prophecy must meet and maintain certain ministry standards and competencies as outlined by the International Assembly and the local churches in which they serve. The lead pastors report monthly to the state offices and quarterly to the International Offices. As outlined by the International Assembly, all pastors pay tithes directly to the state offices under which they serve.



Tayler, Renee, Pastor Brian, Will Sutton

Brian Sutton serves as the lead pastor of the Peerless Road Church in Cleveland, Tennessee. Since his pastoral ministry began in 1991, he has focused on helping churches find God’s plan, direction, and purpose as they pursue the biblical model of reaching, connecting, growing, and serving. Additionally, he has served as a member of the Administrative Committee and Corporate Board of Directors for the International Church of God of Prophecy since 2010.

He and his wife, Renee (a breast cancer survivor), have been married since 1990. Renee serves as a graphic artist for the Church of God of Prophecy International Offices in the Communications Department. Brian and Renee are blessed with two children. Their daughter, Tayler, is a junior at Lee University studying English education. Their son, Will, is a senior at Walker Valley High School and plans to attend Lee beginning in the fall of 2016.

Pastor Brian has earned a Bachelor of Science degree in organizational management from Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, Georgia, a Master of Arts degree in church ministries from the Pentecostal Theological Seminary in Cleveland, Tennessee, and a Master of Arts degree in religion from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Boston, Massachusetts. He is currently pursuing his Doctor of Ministry degree in global Pentecostalism from Gordon-Conwell.

He is the author of *Discovering Holiness: A Quest for God* published by White Wing Publishing in 2014. His two most recent works, *Prevailing Prayer: Developing a Lifestyle of Conversation With God*, and *Minister’s Pocket Manual: Second Edition* are both scheduled for release by White Wing Publishing in July 2016.

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Email: bsutton@peerlessroadchurch.com

Facebook: [Facebook.com/pastorbriansutton](https://www.facebook.com/pastorbriansutton)

Twitter: [Twitter.com/BrianTSutton](https://twitter.com/BrianTSutton)



reach

connect

grow

serve

Associate/Youth Pastor Adam Jones

The ministries of the youth pastor include: Youth Ministries Council, student ministries (middle and high school), Youth Discipleship Classes and Connect Groups, Summer Fire Camp, Missions Committee liaison and Peerless Missions teams interns.



Adam and Jill Jones serve as the associate and youth pastors of the Peerless Road Church. After feeling a call into the ministry at the age of 17, Adam moved to Cleveland, Tennessee, to attend Lee University where he would receive a specific call into the area of youth ministry. During that time, he ministered in youth camps, youth conferences, conventions, and numerous local churches. In December of 2001, Adam married Jill Bevel, and they moved into full-time youth ministry in August of 2002. In May of 2007, they welcomed their first child, a daughter, Brooke Elizabeth. They served the St. Mary's COGOP faithfully until February 2008, when he moved to Lizella, Georgia, to serve with Jill as Georgia's State Youth director for the Church of God of Prophecy. In March of 2011, they welcomed their second daughter into the world, Braylin Grace. They faithfully served there until August of 2012, when they left Georgia in order to come on staff at Peerless Road Church. Since coming on staff at PRC, Adam completed his bachelor's degree at Lee University in May 2014.

Adam and Jill served as camp directors for Georgia's Junior Camp, Senior Camp, Senior High Camp, Jumpstart Youth Retreat, and launched a Young Adult Camp called *Connect* while in Georgia. Adam and Jill have ministered in many camps, retreats, revivals, conferences, conventions, and local churches throughout the United States. In June of 2014, Adam had the opportunity to minister internationally for the first time as he served with the PRC Missions Team in Panabá, Mexico.

Adam and Jill serve PRC together with a genuine relationship to people of all ages at PRC. They serve with a great team of volunteers to minister to middle and high school students in Cleveland, and surrounding areas. Adam also oversees all the Christian Education areas in the role of associate pastor. Their relational approach to ministry has brought stability and greater depth to all ministries of the Peerless Road Church. In the coming year, they hope to work with Pastor Brian in launching an internship program at Peerless Road Church that will help develop leaders within the COGOP through the ministries of PRC. If you would like to be involved in ministry at PRC or would like more information on the internship program, please contact Pastors Adam and Jill.

Email: ajones@peerlessroadchurch.com



Worship Pastor Bryan Wilson

The ministries of the worship pastor include: Leading the congregational worship on Sundays, all music ministries (praise band, praise team, sanctuary choir, special music, etc.), fine arts (drama, video, etc.), technical services, public relations, and interns.



Pastor Bryan came to PRC in November of 2010. He leads congregational worship on Sundays and directs the worship band, choir, praise team, and technical ministries of the church. He and his wife Codie have been married since 2004, and they have a daughter named Dakota. Codie has a master's degree in occupational therapy from the University of Mississippi Medical Center and serves at Bradley Healthcare and Rehabilitation on Peerless Road.

Bryan has been leading worship since the age of 12 in youth ministries, college ministries, and adult ministries. Bryan earned a Bachelor of the Arts in music from Lee University in 2004. While at Lee, he was a member of the Lee

Symphonic Band and Campus Choir, which travel and minister in churches around the country and around the world.

After graduating from Lee, Bryan served five years as a part-time worship leader and full-time youth pastor at his home church in Mississippi before returning to Lee University in 2009. There he completed a Master of Church Music degree in 2010.

Bryan has been writing songs since the age of 15 and has produced several recording projects. His most recent project, "Teach Us to Pray," was produced with the Peerless Road Church worship ministry, and the title song was featured at the 2012 International Assembly of the Church of God of Prophecy.

Bryan has a vision for unity in worship and seeks to bring together people of all ages. The worship ministry at PRC includes a volunteer team of over 60 people, from teenagers to seniors, with a band, orchestra, praise team, and choir. If you would like to be involved in worship ministry, contact Pastor Bryan.

Email: bwilson@peerlessroadchurch.com



Children’s Pastor Cathy Baggerly

The ministries of the children’s pastor include: Oversight of all ministries to children, birth through fifth grade, Children’s Ministries Council, and children’s outreach events.



Pastor Cathy came to Peerless Road Church in December 2005. She has been working with children for more than 20 years and is passionate about seeing them love the Lord with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, as well as loving others. She and her husband, Lee, were married in 1987, and they have three children: Malorie, Logan, and Emma.

Email: cbaggerly@peerlessroadchurch.com

Hispanic Pastors Jorge and Altagracia Collazo

The Hispanic pastors directly oversee the ministries of the Hispanic congregation within the Peerless Road Church under the leadership of the lead pastor. These responsibilities for the Hispanic congregation include: Sunday morning worship, Sunday school class, and Wednesday evening Bible study. They also assist in the visitation of the Hispanic congregation.



In 1986, during a youth revival, Pastor Collazo received the calling into ministry. Two years later, he was appointed to pastor the Church of God of Prophecy in Camden, NJ. He pastored there for eight years. In 1995, he felt impressed by the Holy Spirit to return to his hometown of Utuado, PR to plant a church. After a short period, the church was organized. He pastored the church for fifteen years.

In June of 2009, he was appointed pastor to the Front Street Community Church (COGOP) in Philadelphia, PA. He remained there until June, 2015. He then moved to Cleveland, TN to be near his daughter, Damaris Feliz and family. Brother Collazo has been in ministry for thirty years. He has been married to his beautiful wife, Grace Collazo for 52 years. They have four adult children, nine grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. Their greatest joy is serving people.



Connect Group Pastors Joseph and Evelyn Bathe

The Connect Group pastor is responsible for assisting the lead pastor of the Peerless Road Church with the pastoral care of the Connect Group leaders/coleaders. He helps cast vision and direction and provides ongoing training and accountability for the leaders.



Joseph and Evelyn Bathe bring a rich ministry experience to lead the PRC Connect Group Ministry. Dr. Bathe holds a Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) degree in pastoral studies from Covington Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Evelyn, have served in ministry for 50 years, which includes pastorates in NC, FL, TN, KY, LA, and OH. In addition, they have served as national evangelists, ministering in 30 states. Dr. Bathe has served as a Bible college instructor, in various youth ministry positions, including directing youth camps, as well as media-related ministries. He has experience in business and served as a church executive business administrator. He has been a keynote speaker for seminars, conferences, and men’s retreats. He proudly served his country in the U.S. Army.

His wife, Evelyn, is also a gifted teacher whose ministry has encompassed youth, music, and women’s ministries. She holds an associate’s degree in Christian education from Covington Theological Seminary. In addition, she has approximately 20 years of experience in legal, corporate, and church positions as an administrative/executive assistant.

Joseph and Evelyn Bathe have one son, Jonathan, who is married and living in Lynchburg, VA. They are the proud grandparents of Brooklyn, five, and Jackson, two.

Chaplain Ministry Pastors David and Annette Taylor

The Chaplain Ministry pastor leads the Chaplain Ministry pastors with assisting the lead pastor in visiting and caring for the members, attendees, and friends, of the Peerless Road Church in the hospitals and homes.



David and Annette Taylor began attending the Peerless Road Church in 1987 and moved to Cleveland in 1988. They pastored in Georgia for 11 years; have been Children’s Church pastors for five years; Senior Adult Ministry leaders for two years; Small Group leaders for 15 years. David served on the Peerless Road Church Finance and Administration Committee for ten years. They now serve as the current Chaplain Ministry directors for Peerless Road Church.

David retired from the U.S. Postal Service after 39 years of employment, and Annette retired from the Church of God of Prophecy International Offices after 18 years of employment.

David and Annette have been married for 41 years and have two sons, Lee and Michael, and eight grandchildren.



Senior Adult Pastor Connie Kennard

The Senior Adult members' pastor is responsible for assisting the lead pastor of the Peerless Road Church with the pastoral care of the senior adult members, senior adult ministry, senior adult monthly activities and newsletter, and the annual senior adult banquet.



Connie came to Peerless Road Church in 2004. She was saved in 1977, and worked as a teacher for every age group, Vacation Bible School director, Ladies Ministry director, taught various Bible studies, and was church secretary. She was called to preach in 1988, and began a church in 1998. She and Roger were married in 1965; they have two married daughters and three grandchildren.

Now serving as Senior Adult pastor of Peerless Road Church, Connie is busy preaching every Sunday night, planning activities for senior adults, meeting their needs, and trying to see that they use their God-given talents and abilities, as well as keeping active. They are beautiful people and have so much to give. Connie just wants to serve the Lord.

Email: ckennard@peerlessroadchurch.com



Missions Ministry – Adam Jones, Liaison_____

The Missions Ministry liaison of Peerless Road Church leads the Missions Committee, which works to discern God's leading regarding world missions at PRC. The Missions pastors and Missions Committee lead all short-term missions trips, and interact with the missionaries that Peerless Road Church supports throughout the world.

Serve Ministry – Cathy Baggerly, Liaison_____

Serve Ministry provides opportunities for everyone to participate in reaching the community around us with the love of God through various outreach endeavors. Currently, we offer a food distribution in the gym on the first and third Saturdays of every month. Join us as we fulfill our calling to Reach, Connect, Grow, and Serve!

Women’s Ministry Director Marsha Robinson_____

The ministries of the Women’s Ministry pastor include: Women’s Ministries Council, ladies ministries (Bible studies and activities), and ladies annual breakfast.



Marsha Robinson is Women’s Ministry pastor at Peerless Road Church. Following 30 years of ministry experience, Marsha was ordained with the Church of God of Prophecy in 2012. She is currently copy editor and staff writer for the Church’s monthly magazine, the *White Wing Messenger*. She is a contributing writer for the Regal Books anthology, *I Believe in Miracles*, published in 2013. Marsha sang with the Evangelistic Singers while at Lee University and was a member of the traveling Christian comedy troupe, the Deen Sisters for 15 years. She is married to Bryant Robinson, and they have two children, Jonathan, and Jasmin.

mrobinson@cogop.org



Administrative Staff

Church Administrator/Treasurer, Jane Van Deventer _____

The church administrator and treasurer is responsible for assisting the lead pastor in the day-to-day operations of the Peerless Road Church and is responsible for the overall accounting of the Peerless Road Church under the supervision of the senior pastor.



Jane came to the Peerless Road Church as part-time staff in 1997, as treasurer, and became a full-time staff member as church administrator and treasurer in 2002. Jane served as an accountant at the International Offices in the Financial Department and in the World Missions Department. She has also served as national treasurer during their tenure in Canada and has served alongside her husband as pastor and national overseer. She and her husband, Vernon, were married in 1966 and have three children and four grandchildren.

Email: jvandeventer@peerlessroadchurch.com

Church Hostess, Carolyn Carter _____

The church hostess is responsible for the purchasing of food and supplies for the Peerless Road Church and special functions. She is also responsible for the decorations for special occasions and events.

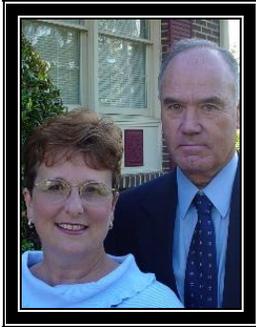


Carolyn moved to Cleveland in 1959, attended, and graduated from Tomlinson Memorial School. She and her husband, Richard, were married in 1962 and have two daughters and five grandsons. She worked as an office secretary at the International Offices and has served the local church as youth leader, V.B.S. director, missions leader, wedding coordinator and director for over 25 years, helped coordinate two missions trips and was the leader of one missions trip to Haiti. She also serves on the Finance and Administrative Committee, and she serves as coordinator of the Peerless Road Church service teams.

Email: constjrc@yahoo.com

Property Managers, Don and Valerie Willis_____

Property managers are responsible for the upkeep of the church property, including outdoor maintenance and lawn care, as well as keeping the inside of the facilities clean and in order in the day-to-day operations of the Peerless Road Church.



Don and Valerie became the property managers in September 2004 and faithfully attend Peerless Road Church. Both Don and Valerie were raised in California and were married in April 1994. Don has two children, and Valerie has three sons. Valerie previously worked at the International Offices, and Don previously worked in construction and remodeling.

Valerie Willis presently serves as the coordinator of the Serve Food Ministry Distribution.

Email: vwillis@peerlessroadchurch.com

III. Servant Leaders

Peerless Road Church Servant Leadership Team

Pastoral Committee

Lead Pastor:	Brian Sutton
Associate Pastor:	Adam Jones
Children’s Pastor:	Cathy Baggerly
Worship Pastor:	Bryan Wilson
Youth Pastor:	Adam Jones
Hispanic Pastors:	Jorge and Altagracia Collazo
Chaplain Pastors:	David and Annette Taylor
Chaplain Ministers:	Joseph Bathe, Jorge Collazo, Edsel Hartman, Gene Malone, Duane Mullins, Harold Parker, Nelson Raburn, David Riggs, Vernon Van Deventer
Connect Group Pastors:	Joseph and Evelyn Bathe
Connect Group Leaders:	Peggy Clements, Jorge and Altagracia Collazo, Rick and Kathy Creasy, Noe and Tammy Estrada, DeWayne and LeAnn Hamby, Mark and Alicia Klepper, Shane and Amanda Lawson, Mike and Monica Luithle, Gennadiy and Valentina Mantsevich, Melva Pohlner, Jody and Joanie Robinson, David and Annette Taylor, Vernon and Jane Van Deventer
Senior Adult Pastors:	Roger and Connie Kennard
Deacons/Deaconess:	Noe Estrada Jr. (Trial), Perry Horner, Roger Kennard, Thomas Pavlou (Trial), Renee Rodriguez, Frank Shroyer, Norman Wojcik, Henry Wyatt

Ministry Directors

Missions Ministry:	Adam Jones, Liaison
Serve Ministry:	Cathy Baggerly, Liaison
Women’s Ministry Director:	Marsha Robinson
Caffeine Connection:	Doug and Annie Baynes, Leaders

Administration Directors

Church Administrator/ Clerk and Treasurer:	Jane Van Deventer
Greeters:	Angela Lamb
Hospitality:	Carolyn Carter
Ushers:	Roger Kennard

Committees

Finance and Administration:	Brian Sutton (Lead Pastor/Chairman), Jane Van Deventer (Clerk and Treasurer), Michael Plumley (Secretary), Carolyn Carter, Paul Holt, Angela Lamb, Frank Shroyer, Randall Stephens, Henry Wyatt
Missions:	Adam Jones (Chairman), Cathy Baggerly, Katelyn Clements, Peggy Clements, Mark and Alicia Klepper, Marlon and Danielle Nelson, Victor Rodriguez, Norman Wojcik
Serve:	Brian Sutton (Lead Pastor), Laurie Pavlou (Secretary), Cathy Baggerly (Children’s Pastor/Staff Liaison), David Calfee, Anita Eskew, Tammy Estrada, Mark Klepper, Alicia Klepper, Gennadiy Mantsevich, Randee Reed, Bethany Stephens, Ana Estrada Walters, Valerie Willis



IV. Leadership Criteria for Committee Members, Directors, Teachers, and Leaders

- A. Must have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- B. Should reverence God with wisdom.
- C. Should be regular attendees of the Peerless Road Church.
- D. Should be regular financial supporters of the church with tithes and offerings.
- E. Should have a consistent prayer life and have the whole church at heart.
- F. Should display an attitude of . . .
 - 1. Willingness to work with the majority even when it is not their suggestion.
 - 2. Loving God and people.
 - 3. Seeking peaceful solutions.
 - 4. Not being critical of others.
 - 5. Speaking the truth using discretion, love, and compassion.
- G. Should display a lifestyle that reflects . . .
 - 1. An outward manifestation of an inward commitment to Jesus and His Word.
 - 2. A good witness in the secular world, as well as the church (integrity).
 - 3. A witness that does not bring a reproach upon the name of Christ and the church.
- H. Should be seeking to live in the fullness of the Holy Spirit.
- I. Should be students of the Word.
- J. Should have a burden for their ministry.
- K. Should unite with the church by membership.

“This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as **servants of Christ** and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. Now **it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful**” (1 Corinthians 4:1-2, *TNIV*).



V. How We Make Business Decisions

- A. The decision-making body of the church is the church conference, which is composed of all covenant members. Regular business conferences are conducted for the purpose of providing information to the church and acting on any current business matters. Called conferences are held when needed to take action between the scheduled meetings. At the end of each church year, an annual business conference reviews and celebrates the blessings of God for the previous year and sets the course for the upcoming year. The date and time of all business conferences are announced in advance.

- B. The Finance and Administration Committee serves the congregation in business and administrative matters. The conference has assigned specific responsibilities to the committee in the following subjects:
 - 1. Recommend an annual budget for consideration by the conference and is responsible for periodic review and monitoring of the church’s financial status during the year.

 - 2. Carry out the business dealings of the church guided by the annual budget that has been approved in conference, along with the supervision of the lead pastor and cooperation of the church clerk and treasurer.



VI. Our Identity

A. Peerless Road Church History

Celebrating the Journey

The Peerless Road Church, a ministry of the Church of God of Prophecy, traces its beginnings some four miles from this present location. In 1923, the Church of God, later renamed Church of God of Prophecy, built a large building on Central Avenue to host its annual churchwide meeting. On the property, a local church was established in the basement of the property in a small auditorium. This small group would one day become the present-day Peerless Road Church congregation.

The group continued meeting in the "Tabernacle" building until 1947, when a newly constructed building was erected on Wildwood Avenue. At that location, the church became one of the leading congregations in the Church of God of Prophecy. Several other Cleveland-area churches were planted by the Wildwood congregation, including the Eastview church (now on Durkee Road) and the Keith Street Church.

In 1973, a committee developed plans for a new church facility at the corner of Peerless Road and Davis Drive, and the first service was held in 1974. In 2002, the church expanded and completed construction of the atrium, a new ministry center, and gymnasium.

The congregation of the Peerless Road Church shares a tremendous legacy of God's faithfulness and Spirit outpouring. From her humble beginnings, this local church has had part in changing lives and developing ministries in Cleveland and throughout the world.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV).

Central Avenue

Wildwood Avenue

B. Pastors of the Peerless Road Church and former Wildwood Avenue Church



C. Becoming a Member of the Peerless Road Church

A Christian is joined to the church by making the same promise that all other members of the fellowship have made. The purposes of the promise (covenant) are to affirm publicly your willingness to follow all the teachings of Christ and your personal commitment to the entire Word of God.



In a public service, the pastor will invite people who have completed *Join the Journey* and who desire to officially unite with the church to come forward. He will request that you place your hand on the Bible and respond

“*I Will*” to the following question:

“Will you sincerely promise in the presence of God and these witnesses that you will

- ***Accept this Bible as the Word of God;***
- ***Believe and practice its teachings, rightly divided, the New Testament as your rule of faith and practice, government, and discipline; and***
- ***Walk in the light to the best of your knowledge and ability?”***

People who have taken this covenant in another local congregation of the Church of God of Prophecy may request that their membership be transferred. Granting and receiving such transfers are acted on in a church business conference. It is the covenant that unites us in the church all around the world, so it is essential that each new member make the same promise. Therefore, in the Church of God of Prophecy, as in some other denominations, transfers are received only from other local churches within our denomination.

Membership may be transferred or terminated at the written request of the member and approved by the local church conference. Membership may be terminated as a means of discipline due to sinful activity or lifestyle.



D. “It’s Bigger Than We Are:” *Our Identity as Part of the Church of God of Prophecy*



The Peerless Road Church is part of a global body called the Church of God of Prophecy. We are united with believers and churches throughout the world who also value prayer, harvest, and leadership development. This union provides a dynamic “synergy” that enables us to better fulfill God’s calling for Peerless Road Church for Reach, Connect, Grow, and Serve.

The Church of God of Prophecy is a vibrant, worldwide body of believers, united in worship, working hand-in-hand to share God’s love and a message of hope to the brokenhearted. Every 24 hours around the globe:

1. Over 500 people receive salvation.
2. Over 200 people are baptized in water.
3. Over 10,000 preaching venues are actively declaring the gospel.

At least one new church opens its doors every day to touch a local community through the efforts of this movement.

The Church of God of Prophecy has over 1.5 million members, worshipping in over 10,000 churches and missions in 130 nations of the world. Nearly 90 percent of our global membership is outside of North America.

In contemporary theological terms, the Church of God of Prophecy is a Protestant, Evangelical, Wesleyan Holiness, Pentecostal Movement that believes in man’s free will regarding salvation.



E. Our Core Values

The Core Values of the Church of God of Prophecy are:

- Prayer
- Harvest
- Leadership Development

F. The Church Today

Today, the organizational structure of the Church of God of Prophecy exists and operates at three interdependent levels:

- International
- Regional or state
- Local

1. The International Level

The international level functions to provide a vast global network of support and interaction for the church’s ministries in all 50 United States and the many nations where it is established. It is guided by a gifted group of experienced leaders referred to as general presbyters. Selected from church leadership around the world, general presbyters provide spiritual oversight, vision, and direction to the church as a whole. They are led by the general overseer, a bishop selected to serve as moderator of the church’s International Assembly. He is responsible for a broad range of inspirational leadership and administrative duties.

The church’s International Offices, located in Cleveland, Tennessee, are designed to deliver essential support services and unique ministry activities. Presently, there are four interrelated divisions within the International Offices serving the church at large—Inspirational Leadership, Global Outreach Ministries, Leadership Development and Discipleship Ministries, and Finance and Publishing Ministries.

The office of the North American presbyter (www.nacogop.org) is also located in Cleveland, Tennessee. The North American presbyter is responsible for appointing state overseers throughout North America and overseeing all ministry activities in that continent.

Every two years, leadership and laity from around the world come together to form the International Assembly—the doctrinal decision-making body of the church. International Assemblies address ongoing biblical revelation, as well as international practical concerns and provide a vehicle for the movement to corporately receive direction as a church family. This weeklong global homecoming, open to all, provides every church member an opportunity to participate with equal voice in business proceedings, as well as to be enriched by diverse, Spirit-filled ministry from around the world.



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Not only are biblical truths such as repentance, regeneration, sanctification, and holiness of life preached during the Assembly, but they are also lived out in local churches around the world. Many people have found that in order to understand this church, you simply must experience the International Assembly.

The Church of God of Prophecy was raised up by God to be a dynamic expression of New Testament Christianity. A verbal covenant visibly and publicly joins believers to the Church of God of Prophecy, both to the local and international body. This covenant does not bring about salvation, but it does serve a needed role in personal development and spiritual maturity by placing the believer in community with others.

2. The Regional or State Level

The regional or state level provides leadership and support within a defined area to accomplish the work of the church in an efficient manner. Overseers are appointed to guide these territories as *servant-leaders*. Their duties include ministering to, overseeing, and appointing qualified pastors within their designated areas, as well as encouraging their region in evangelism outreach.

The Tennessee State Office of the Church of God of Prophecy (www.tncogop.org) is located in Hendersonville, Tennessee. Its purpose is to provide leadership and support to the local churches of the Church of God of Prophecy throughout the state of Tennessee. It is supported by the tithes of the licensed ministers in the state and by voluntary contributions from local churches.

The state overseer selects and equips the state office administrative staff; and he appoints the pastor of each local church, in consultation with each local congregation. Statewide activities promoted by the state office which impact the local church include:

- (1) *State Conventions*: These conventions are held every two years. They provide inspiration, fellowship, and an opportunity to conduct business.
- (2) *Summer Camps*: The state-owned Camp Hickory Hills (www.camphickoryhills.com) in Dickson, Tennessee, is the site for camps ministering to young people. The Peerless Road Church also has a summer camp, "Summer Fire," each year for youth ages 12 and up.
- (3) *Weekend Retreats*: These retreats are for ladies, men, and youth, and they are also held at Camp Hickory Hills and various venues throughout the state.

3. The Local Level (Peerless Road Church)

Local churches (like the Peerless Road Church) are the heartbeat of the Church of God of Prophecy, providing for the immediate needs of congregations in the thousands of cities, towns, and communities where the church's mission is carried out on a daily basis. It is at the local level that people are won to Christ, baptized, brought into fellowship, and disciplined into victorious Christian living.



Local churches are led by a qualified licensed pastor, appointed by the respective overseer who works in cooperation with the local body. The pastor serves as the spiritual and administrative leader of his congregation, and seeks God’s direction for shepherding the flock.

Participatory worship, dynamic preaching, practical evangelistic outreach, activities that support today’s family, biblical teaching, personal growth through ministry involvement, and an accepting family atmosphere that communicates God’s love are all woven into the fabric of local Church of God of Prophecy life.

Many independent congregations have been welcomed into the Church of God of Prophecy in recent times. They have found a church with biblical purity, a sound organizational structure, a relational accountability network and a churchwide commitment to minister to people in today’s contemporary setting.

G. Requirements for Membership

The Peerless Road Church understands that the essential requirement for an individual to join its fellowship is that one be a born-again Christian.

H. Staying Connected

We can stay connected to our brothers and sisters in the Church of God of Prophecy in Tennessee and around the world by attending the events listed above. Also, several forms of communication help to keep us informed. The **White Wing Messenger** (www.cogop.org/ministries/messenger) is published monthly from the International Offices, the COGOP|Connections (www.cogop.org) is available to be viewed and downloaded from the Church of God of Prophecy International Offices website, and the State of Tennessee has an E-newsletter that can be received by email (www.tncogop.org).



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Peerless Road Church and Church of God of Prophecy Contact Information

Our Church

Peerless Road Church

3301 Peerless Road NW • Cleveland, TN 37312 • Office Phone: (423) 303-2680

www.peerlessroadchurch.com

Our Pastor

Brian Sutton, Lead *Pastor*

Pastor's Office: (423) 303-2680 • Email: bsutton@peerlessroadchurch.com

Connect with Pastor Brian on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/pastorbriansutton

Follow Pastor Brian on Twitter at: www.twitter.com/BrianTSutton

State Offices

Church of God of Prophecy • State Administrative Offices (State Overseer, E. C. McKinley)

P.O. Box 2319 • Hendersonville, TN 37075

Phone: (615) 824-3563 • Web Site: www.tncogop.org

Camp Hickory Hills

Camp Hickory Hills

c/o Tennessee Church of God of Prophecy

P.O. Box 2319 • Hendersonville, TN 37077-2319

Physical location:

955 Wilson Hollow Road • Dickson, TN 37055

Phone: (615) 763-6149 • Web: www.camp Hickory hills.org

North American General Presbyter

Church of God of Prophecy • North American General Presbyter (Presbyter, Tim Coalter)

P.O. Box 2910 • Cleveland, TN 37320

Phone: (423) 559-5100 • Web Site: www.nacogop.org

International Offices

Church of God of Prophecy (General Overseer, Sam Clements)

P.O. Box 2910 • Cleveland, TN 37320

Phone: (423) 559-5100 • Web site: www.cogop.org



With a Smart Phone, you may scan the QR Code below to go directly to the PRC Website



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I. Our DNA (Historical Notes on the Church of God of Prophecy Movement)

The Church of God of Prophecy movement began over one hundred years ago in the humble hearts of earnest believers in the rural mountains of Cherokee County, North Carolina.

The Christian Union

From its beginnings, the Church of God Movement consisted of men and women who were characterized by a deep hunger for God. This hunger pushed them beyond common Christian relationship and into a union of believers, committed to the doctrines of the whole Bible. A group of people gathered at the Barney Creek Meeting House in Monroe County, Tennessee, on August 19, 1886. They came together at the prompting of Richard Spurling Sr. and his son R.G. Spurling. James Stone states, “To the world, this meager gathering probably had little significance. To them, however, it was an earnest attempt to find the will of God and break away from binding creeds and traditions.”¹ R.G. Spurling preached to those present at Barney Creek, calling them to sever ties with man-made creeds and become a New Testament church. Eight individuals came forward that day to join together and form a local congregation that would be known as the Christian Union.

There were several published reasons for the desire to form the Christian Union, one of which would open the door for the eventual embracing of Pentecostalism by the movement. Spurling felt that, “The reformers failed to reserve a right of way for the leadership of the Holy Ghost and for conscience.”² Varlack notes, “It was precisely this state of affairs, the lack of fervency of the Holy Spirit, and the absence of true obedience to and proper regard for the Word of God, that sparked our religious forefathers on their search for truth and to attempt a recovery of the New Testament church.”³ The local Christian Union church would be pastored by R.G. Spurling; later they would establish other Christian Union congregations⁴ on their quest to follow the Spirit’s leading.

¹ James Stone, *The Church of God of Prophecy History and Polity* (Cleveland, Tennessee: White Wing Publishing House and Press, 1977), 14.

² Adrian Varlack, *Foundations, The Church of God of Prophecy: Concise History, Doctrine, Polity, and Future* (Cleveland, Tennessee: White Wing Publishing House, 2010), 34.

³ Varlack, *Foundations – The Church of God of Prophecy*, 17-18.

⁴ Andrea Johnson, Editor, *Servants of the Spirit: Portraits of Pentecostal/Charismatic Pioneers* (Des Moines, Iowa: OBC Publishing, 2010), 41.



Shearer Schoolhouse Revival and the Fire-Baptized Influence

In 1896, this small Christian Union Movement would be impacted by a move of the Holy Spirit at a revival held in the Shearer Schoolhouse, in the area of Cherokee County, North Carolina. “Exhibiting the doctrines and practices of Benjamin Hardin Irwin’s fire-baptized movement ... (this revival) electrified the community with some unusual phenomena.”⁵ Apparently this revival, and subsequent meetings were strong in their preaching of holiness, sanctification as a second blessing, and the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Duggar notes, “Sanctification seems to have been one of the principal subjects in the revival that resulted, and many people were sanctified by the blood of Jesus. Soon after the evangelists had closed the revival, the Holy Ghost fell in prayer meetings that were being held. As the people received the Holy Ghost, they began speaking in other tongues.”⁶ The Shearer Schoolhouse revival, and the biblical principles it instilled, would have a lasting effect on the DNA of the Church of God Movement. Early church pioneer W.F. Bryant was seeking the experience of sanctification and wrote, “At the time I was a member of the Baptist church and none of us believed in sanctification, although I attended this revival. I noticed how those who claimed sanctification would go to their fellowmen and fix everything right...The Spirit within me would cry out, ‘give me the blessing like those other few have received.’”⁷ This brush with the Holy Spirit baptism in 1896 would be the precursor to the movement’s eventual embracing of Pentecostalism in doctrine and practice.

The Holiness Church at Camp Creek

Church of God of Prophecy Historian C.T. Davidson noted:

On Thursday, May 15, 1902, a group of the people met at the home of W.F. Bryant, in Cherokee County, North Carolina. Richard G. Spurling Jr. was in their midst, and he organized them as the Holiness Church at Camp Creek. Apparently it favored the continuation of the Christian Union some sixteen years before, but in a different location. Richard G. Spurling was chosen pastor, and W.F. Bryant, one of the officers, was set forth by the newly organized little church, and ordained, making the organization permanent.⁸

In his book, *The Church of God of Prophecy History and Polity*, James Stone takes up the question as to how long the previously formed Christian Union remained together. It is clear that Richard Spurling was the pastor of both churches (Christian Union formed in 1886 and newly formed Holiness Church at Camp Creek in 1902). Stone quotes Vinson Synan’s record of the Christian Union that by 1892 “the Christian Union had already disbanded and the membership had gradually returned to their original churches.”⁹ However, L. Howard Juillert’s *Book of Minutes* concludes that

⁵ Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal, 1901-2001* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 115.

⁶ Lillie Dugger, *A. J. Tomlinson: Former General Overseer of the Church of God* (Cleveland, Tennessee: White Wing Publishing House, 1964), 32.

⁷ Johnson, *Servants of the Spirit*, 41.

⁸ C.T. Davidson, *Upon This Rock, Volume 1* (Cleveland, Tennessee: White Wing Publishing House and Press, 1973), 300.

⁹ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), 82.



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the Christian Union was still together and would be the body that would form the Holiness Church at Camp Creek in 1902,¹⁰ changing their name when moving to a different location. Regardless of which account is accurate regarding the Christian Union, whether it died out or stayed together and was then formed into the Holiness Church at Camp Creek, Synan states, “This church might have existed alone except for the visit in 1903 of a traveling Bible salesman from Indiana by the name of Ambrose Jessup Tomlinson.”¹¹

A.J. Tomlinson and the Church of God

A.J. Tomlinson, who was a Quaker from Indiana, was a preacher who had become earlier acquainted with the Holiness Church at Camp Creek.¹² He was invited to a special time to study God’s Word together at the home of W.F. Bryant on June 13, 1903. Tomlinson was fond of this group, having preached for them several times, and he “appreciated the warm welcome they always gave him (he said). They were a conscientious group and possessed great inspiration and enthusiasm to obey the precepts of the Holy Writ.”¹³ On Friday night, June 12, 1903, Tomlinson decided to climb Burger Mountain, behind Bryant’s home, for a time of seeking God. There he spent the night in prayer and prevailed, receiving what he called a vision of the “Last Days Church of God.”¹⁴ Tomlinson would come back down the mountain and decide to join with the Holiness Church in membership the following day—June 13, 1903. Recalling that day, Tomlinson would later state:

Well if you take the whole Bible, rightly divided, that makes it the Church of God. Why do you want to call it the Holiness Church at Camp Creek? . . . “You have agreed that this that I have said makes it the Church of God, and will you be willing to take it and keep it the Church of God?” They said they were willing. I then asked if they were willing to take me in with the understanding that this IS the Church of God—not going to be, but IS the Church of God? They were willing. So I stood right there in front of the fireplace and Brother Spurling, who has gone to heaven, took the Bible and gave it to me. He handed it to me and said, “Will you take this as the Word of God, believe and practice it, obey its precepts and walk in the light as God is in the light?” I thought deeply. I remembered what a time I had on the mountain. I meant business. God meant Business . . . Right here I gave my hand to Brother Spurling... I took the obligation with deep sincerity and extreme sacredness never to be forgotten.¹⁵

In receiving Tomlinson into the church, where he would come to pastor and later be selected to serve as general overseer, Synan writes: “With winning Tomlinson, the Camp Creek Church gained one of the great organizing geniuses of modern church history.”¹⁶ He further states, “The new denomination was typical of holiness churches formed in American in this period. The second blessing of entire sanctification was sought as a baptism with the Holy Ghost.... Under Tomlinson’s

¹⁰ L. Howard Juillert, *Book of Minutes* (Cleveland, Tennessee: Church of God Publishing House, 1922), 17.

¹¹ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 115.

¹² Stone, *The Church of God of Prophecy: History and Polity*, 22.

¹³ Davidson, *Upon this Rock Volume 1*, 312.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 312-314.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 314-315.

¹⁶ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 116.



dynamic leadership, the Church of God planted churches throughout the mountain areas of Tennessee, Georgia, Kentucky, West Virginia, and North Carolina.”¹⁷ This movement, now known as the Church of God (The name CHURCH OF GOD was officially adopted on January 11, 1907, but was loosely used until that time¹⁸), was moving forward. At this time, however, “regardless of common talk among holiness believers of being led by the Spirit or being filled with the Spirit, there seemed to be that lingering sense that there was always ‘something more.’”¹⁹

The Azusa Street Revival

There were many earlier instances of “stirrings” of the Spirit before Azusa Street. The previously mentioned Shearer Schoolhouse Revival in 1896 is one instance of people receiving the Holy Spirit baptism and speaking in tongues. Additionally, Agnes N. Ozman received the Holy Spirit baptism, accompanied by speaking in tongues as evidence, at a watch night service on December 31, 1900.²⁰ This instance had great significance in relation to Azusa Street. Bible teacher and preacher Charles Fox Parham, known as the theological father of the Pentecostal Movement, had a Bible school that Ozman attended. It was Parham who had laid hands on Ozman and prayed for her to receive the Spirit baptism when she did.²¹ “It was Parham who was credited with first advancing the theological argument that tongues are always the initial evidence of a person’s receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit.”²² Parham had another student at his Houston Bible school named William J. Seymour, an African-American man who was the son of former slaves and who was blind in one eye. Parham had allowed Seymour to listen in to the classes “seated on a chair outside an open window. On rainy days he was permitted to sit inside the building, but in the hallway outside the classroom with the door left ajar.”²³ Seymour had taken greatly to Parham’s teaching regarding tongues as the evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.²⁴ “Without question, William J. Seymour was the central figure of the Azusa Street Revival and will always be remembered as the vessel chosen of the Lord to spark the worldwide Pentecostal Revival.”²⁵

Without the wonderful outpouring of the Holy Spirit during the Azusa Street Revival, the Church of God Movement might have remained only a Wesleyan Holiness Movement and never tasted of the wonderful gift of the baptism with the Holy Spirit that would make it Pentecostal. The Azusa Street Revival was an outgrowth of a home prayer meeting, conducted by William J. Seymour, at the home of Richard and Ruth Asberry at 214 N. Bonnie Brae Street.²⁶ On April 9, 1906, the Holy Spirit was poured out in this home prayer meeting and people received the Holy Spirit baptism with tongues as the evidence. “News spread rapidly, and people came to Bonnie Brae to see and hear for themselves. Within a week the group had rented 312 Azusa Street, and the mission had begun.”²⁷ “A quick search of the area turned up an abandoned two-story frame building.... This building had originally housed the Stevens African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church.”²⁸ Vinson Synan notes:

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 117.

¹⁸ Davidson, *Upon This Rock Volume 1*, 349.

¹⁹ Johnson, *Servants of the Spirit*, 87.

²⁰ Vinson Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 44.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts; Da Capo Press, 2001), 48.

²⁴ Vinson Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 46.

²⁵ Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street*, xvi.

²⁶ Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. van der Mass, *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2002), 344.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 345.

²⁸ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 50.



“Few events have affected modern church history as greatly as the famous Azusa Street Revival of 1906-1909, which ushered into being the worldwide, twentieth-century Pentecostal renewal.”²⁹

Moving to Azusa Street from the home on Bonnie Brae did not diminish the fire of Pentecost. “In the early ‘Azusa’ days, both heaven and hell seemed to have come to town. Men were at the breaking point. Conviction was mightily on the people.... When men came within two or three blocks of the place, they were seized with conviction.”³⁰ The revival grew significantly and the building, which was once used as an old stable, eventually saw between 300–350 worshipers gather every day for meeting.³¹ The services were wonderful and powerful with many healings reported and even a greater number of attendees baptized with the Holy Spirit, with speaking in tongues as the evidence of their baptism. “Many eyewitnesses reported seeing a glow from the building that was visible from blocks away.”³² The message of the Azusa Street Revival was traveling around the world, which prompted many to travel to Los Angeles to experience this phenomenon for themselves. The *Los Angeles Times* even sent a reporter to cover the Azusa Street meetings in their first week.³³

“*The Color Line Was Washed Away In the Blood.*” A significant aspect of the Azusa Street Revival was the racial integration that it saw in its meetings. Reporter Frank Bartleman penned, “The color line was washed away in the blood.”³⁴ It is noted that blacks and whites, men and women, and people from all classes and economic backgrounds came together to worship and experience this new Pentecostal outpouring. Azusa was “a fully integrated work with leadership drawn from blacks and whites, with Hispanics and other ethnic minorities comfortably present in most of its services.”³⁵

The “Apostle of Pentecost to the South.” The amazing accounts of the Holy Spirit’s work at Azusa brought to Los Angeles many seekers; but, none were more important to the Church of God Movement than G.B. Cashwell. An evangelist in the Holiness Movement, Cashwell was “overcome with a desire to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, as taught by William J. Seymour, the pastor of the Azusa Street Mission.”³⁶ Cashwell had heard of the Azusa Street Revival from stories written by Frank Bartleman in *The Way of Faith* magazine.³⁷ Cashwell traveled by rail to the Azusa Street Revival in November of 1906.³⁸ Burgess and Van Der Mass note:

In his first service at Azusa Street, he was taken aback by some practices that to him seemed “fanatical,” but overall he felt that “God was in it.” On first seeking for the baptism in the Holy Spirit, he was antagonized by his aversion to being prayed for by blacks. He went to his hotel room, where he “suffered a crucifixion” and “died to many things,” including his racial prejudice. He went the next night requesting that Seymour and other blacks lay hands on him. He promptly received the Pentecostal experience and, according to his own account, spoke in “English, German, and French.”³⁹

²⁹ Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street: An Eyewitness Account* (Gainesville, Florida: Bridge-Logos, 1980), xi.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 60.

³¹ Burgess and Van Der Mass, *International Dictionary*, 346.

³² Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 53.

³³ Burgess and Van Der Mass, *International Dictionary*, 346.

³⁴ Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (Plainfield, N.J., Logos International, 1980), 54.

³⁵ Burgess and Van Der Mass, *International Dictionary*, 347.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 457.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*



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After Cashwell returned home to North Carolina, he began holding meetings in January 1907 that would prove to be used mightily by God to spread the message of Pentecost.⁴⁰ As a result of Cashwell's ministry, "leaders of several holiness Bible schools accepted the doctrines espoused by Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival,"⁴¹ and many denominations joined or were organized as Pentecostal Movements as a result of Cashwell's Pentecostal ministry.⁴² Because of his dynamic ministry and work for the Lord, Cashwell has been called, "The Apostle of Pentecost in the South."⁴³ He would be a vessel that the Holy Spirit would flow through to touch the Church of God, with the message of Pentecost.

Church of God Becomes a Part of the Pentecostal Movement

General Overseer A.J. Tomlinson preached from the Book of Acts and preached about the Holy Spirit baptism before receiving the experience for himself.⁴⁴ Because of this belief, and his desire for the Spirit baptism for himself and the members of the church, Bishop Tomlinson invited G.B. Cashwell, "the Apostle of Pentecost to the South," to come and preach at the General Assembly of the church in 1908.⁴⁵ It was on Sunday morning, January 12, 1908, that Tomlinson had one of the most wonderful and unique experiences regarding the Spirit baptism.⁴⁶ "While listening to Gaston Cashwell's sermon, A.J. had a very dramatic and physical encounter with the Holy Ghost...after slipping off a chair to the floor at Gaston's feet, A.J.'s body moved as if being examined by a physician as he rolled and tossed back and forth experiencing floods of joy and glory."⁴⁷ Tomlinson spoke in tongues as the Spirit gave the utterance. He was "carried" to many different parts of the world and saw the awful conditions of the inhabitants and was moved with the vision. He testified that he spoke in ten different languages as he traveled, and shared the special presence and power of God through this experience.⁴⁸ "Since his own dramatic experience with the Holy Ghost in 1908, the churches he led, Church of God Cleveland, Tennessee, and what became the Church of God of Prophecy... have continued in the classical Pentecostal tradition."⁴⁹ Synan notes, "With this event it was a foregone conclusion that the Church of God would be a part of the growing Pentecostal Movement."⁵⁰ "The Church of God indeed began to move like a mighty army across the land. In 1910, some 1,005 members were reported in 27 churches. By 1920, those figures had mushroomed to 14,606 members in 389 congregations."⁵¹

⁴⁰ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 66.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Burgess and Van Der Maas, *International Dictionary*, 457.

⁴⁴ Johnson, *Servants of the Spirit*, 85.

⁴⁵ A.J. Tomlinson, *Last Great Conflict* (Cleveland, Tennessee: White Wing Publishing House, Reprint 1984), 233.

⁴⁶ Johnson, *Servants of the Spirit*, 87.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ A.J. Tomlinson, *Answering the Call of God—The Marvelous Experiences of A.J. Tomlinson* (Cleveland, Tennessee: White Wing Publishing House, 1973), 10-13.

⁴⁹ Varlack, *Foundations*, 35.

⁵⁰ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 118.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*



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One of the greatest proofs of the Azusa impact on the Church of God Movement is the tremendous racial harmony within the Church of God of Prophecy family. Just as William J. Seymour’s Azusa meetings propagated racial harmony, so has the Church of God of Prophecy been blessed with the Holy Spirit’s touch in the area of race relations. “The Church of God of Prophecy may be the most racially integrated Pentecostal church in the world... (it) may have been the first church to defy Jim Crow laws in their worship services, and they have long opposed the Ku Klux Klan.”⁵² In relation to Azusa’s revival, Grant Wacker quotes “Apostolic Faith” stating “No instrument that God can use is rejected on account of color.”⁵³ With the acceptance of the Holy Spirit baptism, this is also a true statement in the Church of God of Prophecy; as it was in the Azusa revival, the “color line is washed away in the blood!”⁵⁴

⁵² Burgess and Van Der Mass, *International Dictionary*, 541.

⁵³ Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 144.

⁵⁴ Brian Sutton. “*The Color Line Was Washed Away in The Blood.*” *White Wing Messenger* (October 2011).







Part 3: reach connect grow serve

Our Mission:

We will GROW and help people GROW to become more like Jesus Christ.

“To equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12-13, *TNIV*).

I. What Your Church Will Expect From You

If you are looking for a church where you can simply be a spectator, then this church is probably not the best choice for you. We believe that serving in your church will not only benefit the entire body but will also be the most fulfilling way of life for you. Our goal is:

“Every Member a Minister.”



II. Personal Commitments

We ask the following commitments from those who choose to be members of our church. Please read the scriptures below and complete each sentence to define those commitments.

A. *I will protect the unity of the church by . . .*

1. **Acting in _____ toward other members** (Romans 14:19, 1 Peter 1:22).
2. **Refusing to _____** (Ephesians 4:29).
3. **Believing and practicing the _____ of the church** (Jude 3).
4. **Supporting the _____ and _____ of the church** (Hebrews 13:17).



B. *I will share the responsibility of the church by . . .*

1. _____ **for its growth** (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3).
2. _____ **the unchurched to attend** (Luke 14:23).
3. _____ **those who visit** (Romans 15:7).

C. *I will support the testimony of the church by . . .*

1. _____ **faithfully** (Hebrews 10:25).
2. _____ **a godly life** (Philippians 1:27).
3. _____ **regularly** (Leviticus 27:30; 1 Corinthians 16:2).

D. *I will serve in the ministry of the church by . . .*

1. _____ **my gifts and talents** (1 Peter 4:10).
2. **Being** _____ **by the pastors** (Ephesians 4:11-12).
3. **Developing a** _____ **heart (Philippians 2:3-4, 7).**
4. **Continually** _____ **in my own relationship with Christ** (2 Peter 3:18).

III. Growing in Faith

Faith is the foundation of the entire Christian life (Hebrews 11:6).

A. “The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17, *NKJV*). Nothing can be known or received of God unless man first believes in His existence; and secondly, that God has revealed Himself in His Word.

B. What is faith?

Read Hebrews 11:1

1. *Faith* (noun)—“faith, belief, firm persuasion, assurance, firm conviction, honesty, integrity, faithfulness, truthfulness.”
2. *Believe* (verb)—“to trust in; put faith in; rely on a person, or thing; have a mental persuasion; to entrust, commit; to change or power of.

C. What is the source of true faith?

The only source of true biblical faith is the Word of God. “Faith cometh by hearing...the Word (*Rhema*) of God” (Romans 10:4, 16, 17).



D. Are there different levels of faith?

The Bible teaches that there are various levels of faith.

1. God gives every believer a measure of faith (Romans 12:3-6).
2. Faith is like a seed; it has potential to grow.
3. Examples:
 - a. Little faith (Matthew 6:30).
 - b. Great faith (Matthew 8:10).
 - c. Perfect faith (James 2:22).

E. In relationship to faith, how do we appropriate God’s Word?

1. Locate the promise in God’s Word that fits the need (Philippians 4:19).
2. Fulfill all of the conditions attached to that need (Isaiah 1:19-20).
3. With patience accept the trying of your faith and God’s testing of your faith in the Word (Psalms 105:19; Hebrews 6:12-15; James 1:3, 4).
4. We must firmly and positively claim the fulfillment of the promise and our confession should always be in harmony with God’s Word (Hebrews 3:1; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; 1 John 5:14).

Actively appropriating faith is one of the keys to a victorious Christian life!

IV. Growing in Prayer

Prayer is the key to all spiritual victory.

A. Why should believers pray?

1. Prayer is not an option (Isaiah 56:7).
2. We are to pray without ceasing (Romans 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:17).
3. All men everywhere are to pray (1 Timothy 2:8).

B. What is prayer?

1. Prayer is a discipline. It is bending the will of man before God to admit his need (2 Chronicles 7:14; Matthew 6:9, 10).
2. Prayer is rendering homage to an all-wise and benevolent heavenly Father (Psalms 108:5).
3. Prayer is spending time in conversation with God. Conversation is a two-way communication. “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door pray to the Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly” (Matthew 6:6).



C. What should be our attitude in prayer?

1. We should pray in faith (Hebrews 11:6).
2. We should pray without wavering (Mark 11:24; James 1:6-8).
3. We should pray according to God's will (1 John 5:14-16).
4. We should come to the Father through Jesus Christ, our intercessor (Hebrews 7:25).

D. What are the various types of prayers?

1. Persevering prayer (Luke 11:5-13; Philippians 4:6).
2. Intercessory prayer (Romans 8:26, 27).
3. In the Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:14; Ephesians 6:18; Jude 20).
4. Supplication (1 Timothy 2:1, 2).
5. Giving thanks (Philippians 4:6).

E. Who can be involved in prayer?

1. Individuals (Matthew 6:5-7).
2. Two or three (Matthew 18:19-20).
3. A whole church (Acts 2:42; 4:24). When the church comes together, it is scriptural for all to lift up their voices in one accord in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving (Psalms 18:6; 64:1; 66:19).

V. Growing by Transformation (Sanctification)

A. The God who made us in His image is holy, and He commands us to be holy (Leviticus 19:2; 1 Peter 1:16).

1. Jesus became like us that we might be like Him (John 17:17, 20).

B. How does God make us holy?

1. Faith comes by hearing the Word (Romans 10:17).
 - Blood of Christ preached.
 - We hear in faith.
 - We are regenerated and joined to Christ.
 - Indwelling of the Spirit gives us power to resist sin and walk in the light.
2. As we submit to the searching and leading of the Holy Spirit by the Word . . .
 - We find holdouts to our old will.
 - Contrary desires.
 - Confess sins
 - Mortify deeds of the flesh (Galatians 5:24).
 - Walk in the light.
 - Grow in grace.



When there are no more holdouts or resistances, no more ungodly desires or inclination of our hearts to rebel, we experience the purity and holiness of heart, which is Christian perfection (Romans 2:29; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 6:1; 1 John 1:5-7).

C. Problems of the Flesh

Our problem is not the body, but the “flesh” or human nature that is inclined to rebel against God. God will resurrect the body, the question is, “What to do with the flesh?”

1. We are still fallible, temptable in understanding, temperament, and development by the Fall and its effects on the whole creation and us.
 - a. But we have cleansed the deeds of the flesh and spirit and now live in the perfecting walls with a pure heart of love to God and others (2 Corinthians 7:1).
 - b. If we violate this integrity of heart and life, we experience defilement and distance from God.
 - c. As we walk with this integrity, we experience clearness and closeness.
 - d. Galatians 5:25.
 - e. There is now not only an avoidance of evil, but also a positive seeking and delighting in all of the known will of God (Ephesians 3:17-19).
 - f. Christ came to secure for all those who trust in Him, the experience of power by His blood.

We must seek God in the altar to mortify the deeds of the flesh and put off the “old man” of sin. To experience the freedom from actual and indwelling sin is our goal. Sanctification is subsequent to the “New Birth,” and “Spirit baptism” is subsequent to a clean heart. We must crucify the flesh and allow the blood of Christ to cleanse us daily from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

An additional resource regarding transformation (sanctification) is Pastor’s Sutton’s book, *Discovering Holiness: A Quest for God*. It can be purchased at the White Wing Bookstore on Keith Street, White Wing Bookstore in Bradley Square Mall, by calling the bookstore at 1-800-221-5027, or by ordering online at www.whitewingbooks.com.



VI. The Financial Principles of the Peerless Road Church

“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat (food) in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:10).

As a “storehouse,” our church is a steward of the resources given by God’s people to God’s work. We have committed ourselves to three stewardship principles:

Peerless Road Church is a steward of the resources given by God’s people to God’s work.

- A. **FAITHFULNESS** (1 Corinthians 4:2)
This principle includes a responsibility to plan for the wise use of all our resources. Our budget becomes a tangible expression of the church’s mission and purpose. Each budget covers one fiscal year.
- B. **CONFIDENTIALITY** (Matthew 6:1-4)
The church honors the confidential giving of our donors and does not publish or release information about an individual’s contributions (except with their permission for a particular purpose).
- C. **ACCOUNTABILITY**
 - 1. To God.
 - 2. To the Church of God of Prophecy, of which we are a part.
 - 3. To the local church through the distribution of financial reports.
 - 4. To individuals through issuance of annual receipts for income tax purposes.

VII. The Flow of Funds

- A. The two basic categories of funds received by the church are:
 - 1. **Tithes** defined as 10 percent of each person’s increase into the storehouse for the support of the ministry (Malachi 3:10; Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42; 1 Corinthians 16:2).
 - 2. **Offerings** for specific purposes, in addition to the tithe (2 Corinthians 9:6-9).

During the regular Sunday morning worship services, offerings are received for general church expense, missions, and building fund.

Typically, offerings received during the Sunday evening Life Group services are designated for Peerless Ministries. Special offerings are received occasionally. Income is always earmarked for the stated purpose indicated by the donors on their checks and tithe/offering envelopes. The church’s fiscal year is June 1–May 31.



VIII. What Do We Believe?

From its beginning, the Church of God of Prophecy has based its beliefs on the "whole Bible rightly divided." We accept the Bible as God's Holy Word, inspired, inerrant, and infallible. We believe the Bible to be God's written revelation of Himself to mankind and our guide in all matters of faith; therefore, we look to the Bible as our highest authority for doctrine, practice, organization, and discipline.

It was a strong desire to rely solely on the Bible that led the early pioneers of the church to declare their willingness to be free from all man-made creeds and traditions, to take the New Testament as their only rule of faith and practice, and to give each other equal rights and privileges to read and interpret the Bible as their consciences might dictate. These basic tenets remain intact today; however, as the church grew and spread throughout the world, it was seen that there was safety in a "multitude of counselors" when making doctrinal decisions. Thus, today, all doctrinal matters are agreed upon in one accord by the International Assembly.

We believe the Bible to be God's written revelation of Himself to mankind and our guide in all matters of faith.

The Church of God of Prophecy is firm in its commitment to orthodox Christian belief. We affirm that there is one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe in the deity of Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in the physical miracles He performed, in His atoning death on the cross, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory at His second coming. We profess that regeneration by the Holy Spirit is essential for the salvation of sinful man. We believe that sanctification by the blood of Christ makes possible personal holiness. We affirm the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling we are able to live godly lives and have power for service. We believe in the ultimate unity of believers, as prayed for by our Lord Jesus Christ in John 17. We believe in the sanctity of human life; we are also committed to the sanctity of the marriage bond and the importance of strong, loving Christian families. We are Arminian in theology, Wesleyan Holiness in practice, and Classical Pentecostal in experience.

Furthermore, the church makes prominent other biblical doctrines that have clear New Testament support but may not always be espoused by modern Christianity. These "Important Bible Truths" constitute some of the doctrinal beliefs and practices that enable the Church of God of Prophecy to be named among those organizations that preach the fundamental principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. These truths are an indication of our continuing commitment to walk in the light of God's Holy Word to the best of our knowledge and ability.



IX. The Biblical Principles, Beliefs, and Practices of the Church of God of Prophecy and the Peerless Road Church *Reflects Important Bible Truths (now revised and expanded), based on International Assembly changes.*

The church embraces all biblical doctrines as taught in the New Testament and has listed some that may be helpful to believers seeking to mature in Christ Jesus:

A. Repentance

The presence and work of the Holy Spirit in the world and upon the human heart through the gospel of Jesus Christ (John 16:8–11) brings CONVICTION, an awareness and acknowledgement of sin against God and the need to confess that guilt with godly sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:10). In short, repentance means not only being sorry for sin, but also a turning from and forsaking of the old life (sin habits) for a new walk by faith in God through the Holy Spirit and in company with the people of God (Acts 2:42). The result of repentance is salvation, a work that is both instantaneous (new birth—John 3:3–8) and life-inclusive, beginning with the giving of new life by the Holy Spirit to the believer and climaxing with a glorified body (Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; Hebrews 9:28). Repentance results in justification, regeneration, or what is called the “born-again” experience as explained below.

B. Justification

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:1, 2). Justification is both a state and an act. On the part of the repentant one, it is the state of being without offense toward God. On God’s part, it is His act in forgiving the actual sins for which one has repented and declaring the individual accepted in a new relationship. The individual is said to be justified by faith in Jesus Christ; that is, one’s sins are covered (atoned for), and God no longer holds that person accountable for those sins. New spiritual life has begun (2 Corinthians 5:17), a beginning sometimes referred to as “regeneration.”

C. Regeneration (Born Again)

Regeneration describes the work of God in providing new spiritual life in the believer. Human beings without Christ are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1) and must be made alive or regenerated through the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). This giving of new spiritual life through Jesus Christ enables right relationships with God, the ability to worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24), and is simultaneous with justification (previous page). It is God’s gracious act to rekindle the spiritual life lost in Adam (1 Corinthians 15:22) so one may now walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh (Romans 8:1–11). Accordingly, the individual is said to be “born again” or born of God (1 John 5:1). In responding to the double question of Nicodemus, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:4, 5). To be born again, then, is to become a new creation in Christ, a child of God, justified and regenerated as a result of true repentance and faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. There is no other way to enter the Kingdom. This entrance into a new life of discipleship to Christ (Acts 2:42) engages the believer in actively seeking more of God, fellowshiping and worshiping with God’s people, and intentionally obeying God’s Word as the believer learns how to “possess his vessel (whole body) in sanctification and honour” (1 Thessalonians 4:4).



D. Sanctification

Sanctification, like salvation, ultimately spans the entire life of the believer. Initially, it is a work of grace subsequent to being justified, regenerated, or born again. It is an instantaneous work, which both sets one apart for God (1 Corinthians 1:2) and crucifies and cleanses the old nature, enabling the believer to be free from the dominant rule of sin: “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For, he that is dead is freed from sin” (Romans 6:6, 7). “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11). This dethroning of the old nature, this cleansing, this setting apart, places upon the believer the scriptural demand to “mortify the deeds of the body” through the Spirit (Romans 8:12, 13) and to “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication [sexual immorality], uncleanness, inordinate [abnormal] affection, evil concupiscence [desire for earthly things], and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Colossians 3:5). Second Peter 3:17, 18 further encourages growth in God’s grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ: “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.” There is then in sanctification, a responsibility on the part of the believer to “put off” some habits and practices, and to “put on” others, which means there must be intentionality to holiness (Ephesians 4:22–32). Sanctification empowers us against sin’s control; the believer responds with a renewed mind to be transformed into the image of Christ (Romans 12:1, 2) and to be holy in life and conduct (2 Corinthians 7:1).

E. Holiness

Holiness is a command of our Lord: “Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:14-16), the state of being free from sin (sin’s dominance) made possible by God’s sanctifying and cleansing work (Romans 6:11-14; 1 Corinthians 6:11), and further sustained by active, whole-hearted pursuit of a life of Christlikeness on the part of the maturing believer. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:11, 12). “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14). “For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness” (1 Thessalonians 4:7). “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 7:1). Holiness must also be the Church’s collective goal as the body of Christ to demonstrate the praises (virtues) of Him “who hath called [us] out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9, 10).

F. Baptism With the Holy Spirit

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy [Spirit]. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:38, 39). The baptism with the Holy Spirit as it occurred at Pentecost and in subsequent places in the Book of Acts (8:14-17; 10:44-46; 19:2-7) is a definite experience that is subsequent to the salvation and sanctification experiences or may accompany them in a somewhat simultaneous way.



Jesus said to His disciples, “. . . for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14:17). This indwelling is a definite, instantaneous experience described in the Scriptures by the word “baptism” and is accompanied by the evidence of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. The baptism is also the Holy Spirit’s enduement of the believer for service in the Kingdom, as the church was empowered at Pentecost to go forth with the message of the gospel: “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy [Spirit] is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). This experience should not be confused with water baptism, regeneration, or sanctification.

The Holy Spirit “is come” [has been sent by Christ—Acts 2:33] to “reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment,” to serve as the church’s guide and director, and to reveal the things of Christ (John 16:7-15). As such, it is important for believers to seek both the baptism (Acts 2:38, 39) and His fullness (Ephesians 5:18) in order that they may become familiar with His leadership and guidance and cooperatively participate in His work, both for personal Christian maturity and for service in Christ’s mission to the world.

G. Speaking in Other Tongues

Speaking in (with) other tongues—languages (magnifying God through uttering His wonderful works in languages normally unknown to the speaker—Acts 2:4-8, 11; 10:44-46) is common in the Book of Acts to describe the coming of the Holy Spirit upon believers as clearly stated in the foregoing scriptural texts. Acts 19:6 also shows the same result (speaking in tongues and prophesying) when the apostle Paul laid hands on twelve believers in the city of Ephesus for them to receive the Holy Spirit. In regulating the order and use of spiritual gifts to the Corinthian saints (1 Corinthians 12-14), Paul also allows for the private use of tongues in prayer to God and indicates that this edifies the individual believer’s spirit (14:2-4). The gifts of tongues and interpretation of tongues for public use in the assembled congregation are, of course, to be distinguished from the baptism with the Spirit as applied in the individual’s experience. Paul makes this clear by referring to his own experience (cf. Acts 9:17-19) when he says, “I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all” (1 Corinthians 14:18). While closing his admonition by prioritizing the gift most useful for the public edification of all (prophecy), he was careful to add, “and forbid not to speak with tongues” (v. 39).

Following the biblical pattern in Acts, the Church of God of Prophecy and other classical Holiness/Pentecostal churches teach that speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance is the initial evidence (observable by others) of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. However, it is not to be regarded or sought as an “end-all” experience. Daily walking and living in the Spirit (Romans 8:1-14) will continue to build Christian character (the fruit of the Spirit) and should be the desire and practice of every believer.

H. Fruit of the Spirit

As mentioned above, daily walking and living in the Spirit will cause the fruit of the Spirit to be regularly manifested in the life of the believer: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22, 23). Such fruit cannot be produced by the flesh or by human nature. Indeed, the



opposing nature and starkly contrary deeds of the flesh are partly enumerated in the same text with the concluding remark, “they which do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (v. 21). “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (v. 16). “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth)” (Ephesians 5:8, 9). The Spirit’s work is crucial to the life of the believer and to the church.

I. Full Restoration of the Gifts to the Church

In accordance with the Spirit’s work, various spiritual gifts are given to and in the church and are manifested through individuals sometimes in an apparently resident manner (repeatedly) and, at other times, spontaneously, as by direct unction of the Spirit in a given setting (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Ephesians 4:7-16). Although there are historical periods during which spiritual gifts were not as prevalent as other times, there is no scriptural warrant to support the idea that these gifts ceased. Based on the foregoing scriptural texts and others, the Church of God of Prophecy teaches that spiritual gifts exist in the body of Christ and are owned, distributed, controlled, and operated by the Spirit as it pleases Him.

The church does not advocate personal claims to the gifts, but encourages individuals to humbly know and fulfill their callings to Christian service in response to the Spirit’s leading and with the abilities He gives. As the church is restored to New Testament power, the gifts of the Spirit are expected to serve to edify the body of Christ in these last days just as those same gifts did in earlier times.

J. Signs Following Believers

Because of spiritual gifts and the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit, miraculous signs and wonders may accompany the works and ministries of true believers. Mark 16:17-20 records, “And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. . . . And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.” While Jesus identified for His apostles what may follow in the lives of those who believe, the import of this text, when balanced against other salvation scriptures such as Romans 10:8-13, does not allow for these to occur (whether simultaneously or one by one) in every instance of salvation. However, the church sees no scriptural warrant for the ceasing of these signs, but believes they have occurred and are still occurring today.

For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy [Spirit], according to his own will (Hebrews 2:2-4).



K. Divine Healing

God’s sovereign grace and mercy, through the atonement of Jesus Christ for all our sins and ultimately for all the consequences of sin, provides for the healing/salvation of our souls as well as our bodies in His work on Calvary. In the tradition of Jesus and His apostles as recorded in the Gospels and Acts (Matthew 10:8; Mark 3:1-5; 9-12; 14, 15; Acts 5:12), the church believes that divine healing is accomplished by the power of God without the aid of medicine or surgical skills (Matthew 8:14-17). While it is clear that God does not always heal instantaneously in response to all prayers for healing (whether of the individual or of someone else praying on behalf of an individual—see 2 Timothy 4:20), it is also a clear biblical duty of the elders and ministers of the church to pray for the sick and to visit the sick (James 5:13-18 with Matthew 25:34-40). “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases” (Psalm 103:2, 3). This text specifically addresses the soul, but the whole person (spirit/soul and body) can be divinely healed by the power of God. The healing of individuals in response to faith and prayer (Acts 3:11-16) and by God’s special mercy (to spare certain of His servants more sorrow, cf. Philippians 2:25-27) is definitely confirmed in Scripture. We have a duty to continue to pray fervently for the sick, humbly leaving it in God’s hands to work His sovereign will.

L. Water Baptism

Water baptism is the act of being immersed in water according to the commandment and instructions of Christ (Matthew 28:19). This ordinance has no power to wash away sins, but is the answer of a good conscience toward God (1 Peter 3:21) and represents for the believer an identity with the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord (Romans 6:3-5). Mark 16:16 further reinforces the necessity of this step of obedience: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” On the Day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter told those under conviction what they should do: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). Obviously, the apostles literally followed the Lord’s instructions, and we can do no less. Baptism, then, is outward evidence of our submission to Christ in salvation and our public declaration that we are His followers. It identifies us with His people in His kingdom. “Then they that gladly received His word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (2:41; see also 10:47, 48 and 16:30-33).

M. The Lord’s Supper

The Lord’s Supper is a sacred ordinance that our Lord himself instituted on the night He was betrayed as He ate the Passover with His disciples (Luke 22:14-22). He instructed that this be done in remembrance of Him. It is representative of our communion and fellowship with Him. The apostle Paul reiterated the Lord’s instructions to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 11:23-25), adding some helpful details:



For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, [in an unworthy manner], shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, so that we are not condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another (vv. 26-33).

It is therefore the church's position that this be observed with all gravity, and He demonstrated His posture as a servant among them by washing their feet (John 13:3-5). In establishing this spirit of servanthood among them, Jesus said,

Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. . . . If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them (vv. 12-15; 17).

The church encourages that footwashing be observed in the same service as the Lord's Supper whenever possible and in a decent and orderly manner.

N. Tithing and Giving

Tithing means to bring one-tenth of our increase into the treasury of the church (Proverbs 3:9, 10). The first biblical record of tithing to God's work began with Abraham who paid tithes to Melchisedec (priest of the Most High God) of the spoils from his battle with the kings (Genesis 14:18-20), continued under the law, and received the approval of our Lord (Matthew 10:5-10; 23:23). Other New Testament writers reference God's provisions that they who preach the gospel should live (be supported) by the gospel hearers (Luke 10:7; 1 Corinthians 9:6-14). See also Hebrews 7:4-10, which gives tithing a certain generational transcendence. The church considers that the scriptural obligation to tithe is not fulfilled by just giving directly to the poor or to individuals or good causes. While the church espouses and participates in all such support, her understanding of the biblical practice of tithing is that tithes are paid—brought into the treasury of the church for the Lord's work, especially for the benefit of those who minister the Word (Hebrews 7:8). God's blessings and favor will follow in all the productive areas of life (Malachi 3:7-12).

Giving of offerings differs from tithing and is done in addition to tithing. Both are part of God's plan to finance His work on earth (1 Corinthians 16:1-4; Philippians 4:10-19). A spirit of generosity has always permeated the church from very early times (Acts 4:32-35), and the apostle Paul quoted our Lord to the Ephesian elders in his farewell address advising them ". . . to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (20:35). Once received into the church's treasury, tithes and offerings are regulated through appropriate church decisions and are administered by authorized church policies and personnel.



O. Restitution Where Possible

Restitution is the act of restoring something wrongfully taken or the satisfying of one who has been wronged. Making things right as far as is humanly possible is a natural result of salvation by God's grace as seen in the way Zacchaeus responded to our Lord's saving visit to his house: "And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; 'Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.' And Jesus said unto him, 'This day is salvation come to this house, forso much as he also is a son of Abraham'" (Luke 19:8, 9). Where it is impossible to make contact with the person or institution involved, the believer should still exhibit a desire to return what was taken, to restore a relationship, or to seek forgiveness. When necessary, those who make restitution should bear patiently any consequences that may result such as legal sanctions, financial costs, or even rejection by the individuals approached. "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men" (Acts 24:16).

P. Premillennial Second Coming of Jesus

Our Lord Jesus Christ is coming back to earth again (Acts 1:11), and the church understands this coming in two phases: First, in midair to resurrect the dead saints and to catch away the living saints to meet Him so that all who are in Christ can attend the Marriage Supper of the Lamb: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17; see also 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52). "And he saith unto me, 'Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he saith unto me, 'These are the true sayings of God'" (Revelation 19:9). Second, Jesus will return with the saints to reign on earth for a thousand years: "And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection" (20:4, 5; see also Zechariah 14:4-9; Revelation 5:10; 20:6).

Q. Resurrection

God's plan for the world includes a time of accountability of all people (living and dead) before His judgment seat. For this reason, all the dead, both righteous and wicked, will be resurrected. As part of the assurance of this judgment, God raised Jesus from the dead and appointed Him judge (Daniel 12:2; Acts 17:30, 31; Acts 24:15; 2 Corinthians 5:10). However, the resurrection of the wicked dead and their time of judgment will not occur until after the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth with His saints (Revelation 20:4-6). Paul expressed the Christian's hope in the resurrection this way: "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Philippians 3:10, 11). We look for the Savior from heaven. Paul says, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (v. 21).



R. Eternal Life for the Righteous

In Jesus' high priestly prayer, He defined eternal life as follows: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). The New Testament everywhere teaches that eternal life is promised to those who believe in Jesus: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Those who die in the Lord and those who are serving Him when He returns will receive the reward of eternal life: "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:22, 23).

S. Eternal Punishment for the Wicked

How we live our lives in this present world determines our destiny in the next, our eternal reward (Daniel 12:2; Romans 2:4-9). The unconverted and the wicked are doomed to eternal punishment from which there is no escape—no liberation, no annihilation: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matthew 25:46). "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8). "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

T. Substance Abuse

1. Abstinence From All Liquor or Strong Drinks

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1). "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment" (Isaiah 28:7). "Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags" (Proverbs 23:20, 21). Because of these and other biblical texts, the Church of God of Prophecy teaches abstinence from the use of intoxicating beverages. Even slight indulgence is unwise (and could lead to sin) and not in keeping with scriptural standards of holiness. Scriptural teaching is, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). We are also advised "That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour" (1 Thessalonians 4:4. See also 1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:10; 10:31; Galatians 5:21).



2. Concerning Tobacco, Opium, Morphine, etc.

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 7:1). “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy [Spirit] which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20). The use of tobacco in any form is forbidden, as well as the habitual use of narcotics or other habit-forming drugs. Addictions and enslavements to drugs or other substances are incompatible with the surrender of our bodies to the Lord as holy vessels of honor for His use (Romans 12:1, 2; 1 Thessalonians 4:4). “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

U. Concerning Food or Drinks

The New Testament makes no rigid rule concerning what foods a Christian shall eat or drink with the exception of strong drink and addictive and enslaving substances. “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Colossians 2:16, 17). Thus, we have no right to judge what our brother or sister eats or drinks. The legal restrictions of the Mosaic Law concerning these were not extended into the Grace Dispensation: “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy [Spirit]” (Romans 14:17). See also 1 Corinthians 8:8 and 1 Timothy 4:1–5.

V. Sabbath

The Book of Genesis tells us that on the seventh day God ended His work and blessed that day and sanctified it (Genesis 2:2, 3). This was no doubt His preparatory plan to set Israel apart as a special people, for to them, He gave the Law, which included the observance of the Sabbath. Jesus’ corrective to the Pharisees’ strict observance of the Sabbath (Mark 2:27, 28) placed people above enslavement to the day and asserted His lordship over the day. As such, the Church of God of Prophecy teaches that observance of that day per se was not carried over into the Grace Dispensation. Sunday is not the Sabbath, but merely a day set aside to give special attention to the worship of God. In the early church, they referred to Sunday as “the first day of the week” and later as “the Lord’s Day” or “Resurrection Day.” Therefore, worship on Sunday is also very appropriate. Christians are required to keep every day holy rather than just one particular day. The Jewish Sabbath was also a type of Jesus Christ who is presented in Scripture as our rest (Hebrews 4:1-11). “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days; Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Colossians 2:16, 17. See also Romans 14:5, 6).



W. Adornment

Scripture does not prohibit the use of a cultural wedding symbol due to marital, social, and cultural conditions; nor does it establish its necessity. In certain instances, the marriage symbol or emblem may strengthen the marriage arrangement and order, and thus its use is not for ornamentation. Therefore, the cultural wedding symbol or emblem, though not necessitated, may be worn due to marital, social, and cultural situations in order to preserve the headship principle and the integrity of marriage (Genesis 3:16; 1 Corinthians 11:8; Ephesians 5:22, 23). Scripture neither prohibits (absolutely) nor necessitates the use of ornamental adornment. It does give strong precautionary principles for its use such as modesty, shamefacedness, and sobriety and calls attention to the ornament of the inner man, that of “a meek and quiet spirit” (1 Timothy 2:9, 10; 1 Peter 3:3, 4). Ornamentation must not be used in any way that lends itself to idolatrous, occult, or lustful practices (Isaiah 3:18-22; Acts 8:9; 19:19; 1 Corinthians 5:10; 6:9; Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 2:20-23). It is also important to remember that adornment includes more than jewelry alone. To apply the prudent principles of Scripture (both for those who wear and those who do not), an overriding principle is found in Romans 14:13: “Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s [sister’s] way.”

X. Membership to Lodges/Secret Societies

The Bible is opposed to the people of God being unequally yoked together with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14-18); it is opposed to deeds done in secret, and it demands the complete and undivided loyalty of God’s children: “Jesus answered him, ‘I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing’” (John 18:20; see also Luke 16:13). Many secret societies/organizations require the taking of an oath of secrecy and oath-taking is expressly forbidden (see the following paragraph)—as we shall see shortly (Ephesians 5:12, 13).

Y. Wholesome Speech of the Believers

The taking of an oath is a vain thing and condemned in the Scriptures. An affirmation to the truth of anything is sufficient and usually accepted even in courts of law: “‘But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil’” (Matthew 5:34-37; see also James 5:12). The term “swearing” is also used of profanity, which the Bible teaches against: “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Ephesians 4:29; see also 5:4).



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Z. Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage

Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:18–25; Deuteronomy 6:7; Matthew 5:32; 14:3, 4; 19:3–12; Mark 10:12; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 5:1–5; 6:9–18; 7:2, 11; Colossians 3:18–21.

1. Marriage and Family

The Church of God of Prophecy affirms the biblical teaching that marriage is sacred and should not be entered into lightly without proper preparation. Marriage was originally instituted by God as a properly recognized covenant relationship between one man and one woman for life. The church affirms the biblical family as a father and mother in wedlock who may procreate children. The church further asserts that the home, including the extended family, is to be guided by love, discipline, and other nurturing aspects as taught in God’s Word. Because the church is committed to the sanctity of marriage and human life, we diligently stand against abortion, incest, abuse, euthanasia, adultery, divorce, homosexuality, and lesbianism, which we believe are contrary to God’s original design as expressed in His Word. All biblically unlawful unions such as same sex, incestuous, or polygamous marriages are renounced by the church even if they are recognized as legal by civil governments.

2. Divorce and Remarriage

Concerning “divorce” in the above context, the church means the breaking of a legitimate, lawful, biblical marriage and holds firmly to the principle that such divorces are not God’s will, especially between Christians. Forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing should be sought as a first priority in order to preserve marriages and prevent divorce. The church also recognizes that despite biblical teaching and honest human effort, divorces do occur sometimes against the will of one or the other party. Therefore, the church recognizes (in a pastoral sense) those causes, in addition to death, that would be recognized as ending a previously valid biblical marriage. In such cases, delineated on the following page, marriage partners would not be classed as adulterers even though remarried:

- a. If persons were divorced and remarried for any reason prior to their personal salvation and have demonstrated a willingness to seek restitution (forgiveness from the offended spouse) and restoration where possible.
- b. If a divorce occurred because of a spouse’s habitual adulterous behavior and efforts to bring reconciliation are no longer possible.
- c. If divorce occurred because of spousal or child abuse, such as incestuous behavior that seriously endangers the life and health of the spouse or family and violates the sanctity of holy matrimony.

Under no circumstances should Christians or church members initiate or seek divorce without completely exhausting all biblical and counseling avenues to restore, rebuild, and sustain their marriages. Marriages that clearly violate biblical standards (such as incestuous marriages) may be appealed to the presbytery for specific consideration. All divorce and remarriage cases not falling within the categories described above should be referred for counsel and resolution to the pastor and local church leadership, the state/regional/national presbytery, or the general ministerial presbytery (which includes the general overseer and general presbyters) as may be appropriate.⁵⁵

⁵⁵See “The Biblical Institution of Marriage” Final Document, Church of God of Prophecy, 94th International Assembly Minutes, 2006, pages 152-177. See also “The Family Manifesto” originally written and owned by “FamilyLife,” and specially adapted (with permission) by Family Ministries for interchurch use by the Church of God of Prophecy, International Offices.





Part 4: reach connect grow serve

Our Mission:

We will SERVE God by serving people.

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’” (Matthew 25:34-40, TNIV).



“The Ministry of Jesus”

Pastor Brian Sutton

Section Headings:

1. He Came In the Spirit
2. He Came To Preach Good News to the Poor
3. He Came To Proclaim Freedom to the Prisoners
4. He Came To Give Sight to the Blind
5. He Came To Release the Oppressed
6. He Came To Proclaim the Year of the Lord’s Favor
7. He Gave To Us the Ministry of Reconciliation

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:18-19, NIV).

By referencing Isaiah’s powerful prophecy from Isaiah 61:1-2, Jesus not only acknowledges who He was, but He also tells the world what He has come to do. His ministry would include those whom the world has cast aside and rejected. Jesus’ pronouncement, and acceptance of this mission, was a signal of God’s Kingdom here on this earth.

There has never been a greater time for ministry than today. There have never been more hurting people. There have never been more confused people. There have never been more needy people. People on every corner and in every land cry out for something today that fulfill their needs. We know that Jesus Christ is the answer to every question.

We examine carefully what Jesus said about Himself and His ministry in Luke 4 and we may think of 7 areas where Jesus is speaking to the church to follow him in ministry.

“He Came In The Power Of The Spirit”

The incarnation of Christ is at the center of the Salvation of mankind. God comes down to earth through His Son Jesus. One, who is fully God, yet fully man, has work to do that goes beyond what any being, other than He, could accomplish. Jesus had come to bring a different and radical Kingdom to this earth. One where we must love our enemies, pray for those who use us, turn the other cheek and a Kingdom where the least will become the greatest. Christ’s proclamation that God’s Spirit was upon Him and anointing Him for service, is a truth that we, the Body of Christ cannot ignore if we desire to minister to those in need around us and beyond. Just as Christ desired and required the Spirit’s equipping; the church will require this same anointing to accomplish God’s will. Desiring that His disciples would follow His example, Jesus said in **John 15:5, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”** Whether he was turning water into



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wine, healing the sick, or raising from the dead, Christ worked with a dependence upon the Holy Spirit's power.

We, the people of God, must recognize the need for the ongoing sustaining power of the Holy Spirit in our lives, rather than a simple one time experience. Without the Spirit's same anointing upon us, our efforts will be in vain. Like Christ, we must have the Holy Spirit's power to equip us and sustain our work. Our cry is not for the Holy Spirit to simply baptize us today, but Holy Spirit fill us and lead us EVERY DAY as we give Jesus away. Apart from you God, we can do nothing!

"He Came To Preach Good News to the Poor"

Jesus proclaims that he was to preach the good news to the poor. We see a Savior who specifically speaks to those who suffer. The poor that Jesus speaks of in Luke chapter four are poor, not only because of their lack of material wealth, but because of their political and spiritual circumstances. "The Bible clearly and repeatedly teaches that God is at work in history exalting the poor and casting down the rich who got that way by oppressing or neglecting the poor. God is on the side of the poor."⁵⁵

Jesus has not come to give the poor a material bailout that will bring great riches; rather, He has come to provide something of much greater value: Himself. His heart is clearly open to the most vulnerable. Jesus has come to provide spiritual riches to those who sit in spiritual poverty, as well as hope to those who are materially poor. Those to whom Jesus speaks are not those who are poor because they do not work, or because they are lazy. They are poor because they are oppressed by the religious and political systems of their day, as well as, our enemy, Satan. The good news that Jesus proclaims is that He came for all mankind; He even came for those who have no riches to purchase their way out, and no means to buy hope and independence.

Jesus accepts this prophetic mission and speaks it vocally for the Body of Christ to hear. As the people of God, we are now challenged to be Christ's representatives here on earth, also ministering to the poor as He did. Jesus proclaims in **Matthew 25:31-40, 31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. 34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'** 37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' 40 "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

⁵⁵ Ronald J. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* (Dallas, Texas: Word Publishing, 1997), p. 62.



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We will follow Christ’s lead and seek to minister to those that the world has counted unimportant. How wonderful to know that we will not only model the lifestyle of Jesus when we minister to the poor and needy, but we will also minister to Christ as we serve the “least of these.”⁵⁶

“He Came To Proclaim Freedom To The Prisoners”

Luke chapter 6:17-19 tells the story of a great multitude gathering from Judea, Jerusalem and the seacoast of Sidon and Tyre to hear Jesus and be healed of their diseases.

He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by evil spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all⁵⁷ (Luke 6:17-19, NIV).

Verse 19 states that in reference to this particular gathering “**He healed them all.**” Many there were tormented by unclean spirits and He healed them as well. The unclean spirits mentioned here were literally holding people hostage, as if they were their property. Christ’s coming and ministry was a declaration that God’s grace had come to even these. Not only would they be cleansed, but they could now be reconciled to God, through Him.

Christ’s proclamation of freedom takes the sinner beyond simple forgiveness for sin into freedom from sin. Jesus has come to destroy the power of sin in our lives. **Romans 6:22 records, “But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.”** “Jesus Christ sets us free from the power of sin. While it is still possible for us to sin, we can be freed from the compulsion to sin.”⁵⁸ Our friends, our neighbors, our sons, our daughters, and all of those that we meet who are in the prison of sin, are those whom Jesus came to rescue. We cannot only supply food for their bellies or pray small prayers for the forgiveness of their sins; we must share with them the power of Christ to break them free from the bondage of sin, and the addictions, that hold them in the tragic grip of Satan.

“He Came To Give Recovery Of Sight To The Blind”

Jesus’ proclamation that He would recover sight to the blind applied to much more than the simple healing of a person’s natural sight. The curse of oppression and spiritual poverty upon the lowest of society could be removed, if only people could see the way out; this way out was Jesus. The Apostle Paul described this blindness as a veil⁵⁹ that could only be lifted by turning to Christ. Though “Blindness was often understood to be a punishment for evildoing,”⁶⁰ Jesus now offered sight to those who had never been allowed to see and sight to those who had never even tried to see.

⁵⁶ Matthew 25:45, NIV

⁵⁷ Luke 6:17-19 NIV

⁵⁸ George Hunter III, *Church for the Unchurched* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), p. 50.

⁵⁹ 2 Corinthians 3:15-16 NIV

⁶⁰ R. F. Youngblood, General Editor, *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986), p. 357.



Jesus' promise to bring the restoration of sight was a radical idea. Now all who desired to see Jesus, and experience his truth, could receive their sight. By coming to Him, they will no longer be required to depend on the leading of others to find their truth. His restoration of sight would make it possible for believers to now see the He is way the Way, the Truth and the Life. Through Him, the veil that had hindered man's ability to see and experience God would be removed. Through Him, man could now see God for who He really was and they could experience God for themselves.

"He Came To Release The Oppressed"

At no other place in the proclamation of Christ's mission do we see a greater example of His desire for the Kingdom of God to be at work in the world. Jesus addresses one of the most misunderstood concepts in scripture: the oppression of others. A perfect example of the oppression that Jesus came to stop is found in **Mark chapter eleven**:

On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written:" 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.' The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching (Mark 11:15-18, NIV).

This short reference to oppression is an example of God's desire for all people to have "equal access" to the Father. The oppression of God's people had become so terrible in Jerusalem that even the sacrifices being offered to God were being used to make money, and this was being done at the expense of the poor who came to worship. Money changers were the people who were exchanging Roman money into the shekels that could be given to God inside the temple; and vendors were selling "priest approved" animals that could be sacrificed inside the temple. These practices in themselves could possibly have been done as a service to worshippers; however, Jesus clearly saw that inflated prices were being charged, even to the poor. By oppressing the people in this way, they were literally denying many of the poor into God's house to offer sacrifices. This was being done with the approval and cooperation of the temple priests, who were probably receiving a portion of the profits.

Jesus' turning over of the tables is the visual expression of what He said He would do as the Spirit of the Lord anointed Him. He was standing up for the oppressed and condemning those in power who were doing the oppressing.

In Christ there would be a freedom from oppression. As the church, we are called to be very careful in all aspects of our work within the body of Christ. Are we providing equal access to God and equal access to Spiritual growth to everyone, regardless of their economic or educational status, gender, race, or nationality? Is it modern day oppression for the church to build dividing walls within our congregations that may oppress our members and limit their access to God? The church should be a place where no one is oppressed but all find Jesus, the way, the Truth and the Life. Within the walls of the church it is possible that even our judgmental attitudes may serve to oppress those who are in our fellowship? God help us to remove all of the barriers possible to people finding Jesus!



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“He Came To Proclaim The Year Of The Lord’s Favor”

The “year of the Lord’s favor” is a Jewish term for the Year of Jubilee, which was an Old Testament tradition (Lev. 25:8-54) whereby every fifty years all the rich Israelites surrendered their property and the poor Israelites were forgiven their debts. Thus everyone started all over again. It was, in other words, a periodic effort to redistribute the wealth of Israel.

The year of Jubilee’s great strength was that it allowed a fresh start to all, even those who had made poor decisions and had placed themselves into situations that they could not get out of. Jesus’ words regarding this year of Jubilee was a pronouncement of the grace of God that would now not only come every 50 years but through him was available every day! Jubilee for Israel meant that those undeserving of debt relief were to be forgiven, and all things restored to them.⁶¹

As God’s church, we make that same pronouncement to the world that the cancelling of debts by Jesus is a Spiritual one. Man’s sin debt would now be forgiven by Christ’s own sacrifice; and we can be released from the most significant debt in this world: the debt of sin.

“He Gave To Us The Ministry of Reconciliation”

The Apostle Paul said in **2 Corinthians 5:18-19**, **“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”**⁶²

As Jesus was God incarnate to this world, the church is now called to be the expression of Christ to our world. We receive the ministry that Christ has given us as his body to: serve those who are poor, reach those who are oppressed, carry those who need deliverance, pray for those who need healing, lead those who are blind, to pronounce the day of freedom to those who bound by the debt of sin and be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ to proclaim that Jesus died and rose again to bring us into relationship with a loving and forgiving God.

Because of the grace of God through Jesus, the prisoner is no longer responsible for the payment for his crimes. If Christ has made our payment, through His own blood, there is now no condemnation upon the prisoner whom Christ has made free.⁶³ Christ’s freedom for the prisoners does not only loose them from bondage, His freedom allows them to now become attached or reconciled to God. The freedom that Jesus gives does not send a prisoner freed from sin into the street, but into the loving arms of the church, His Body! There will now be no men and women freed from prison and simply thrown out onto the street and out into the cold world, with only the clothes on their back, and holding a suitcase, with no place to go and no one to pick him up upon his release. In Christ, the freed prisoner is reconciled and restored, as if no crime had ever been committed. His freedom is not only a freedom from sin but a restoration to God. We will be the hands and feet of God who await these released prisoners. They will not be released to “nowhere and no one.” We will be waiting at the prison door to welcome them to our family and be a part of God’s restoration process as His ministry of reconciliation.

⁶¹ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary of the Bible: Abridged by Ralph Earle* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1967), p.862.

⁶² 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 NIV

⁶³ 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 NIV



I. Serving at Peerless Road Church

Equipped to Serve: The Holy Spirit Baptism

We are living in the age of the Holy Spirit. God has designed that everything in the church be done by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the last days was foretold by the Old Testament prophets (Isaiah 28:11, 12; Joel 2:28, 29; Ezekiel 11:19,20; 36:26, 27).

A. What are the Bible proofs of the personality of the Holy Spirit? (Ephesians 5).

1. The Holy Spirit is a personality, not a mere influence or power. The Holy Spirit is spoken of as “He” (John 16:13, 14).
2. Attributes of personality ascribed to Him:
 - Knowledge—1 Corinthians 2:9-11
 - Will—1 Corinthians 12:11
 - Mind—Romans 8:27
 - Love—Romans 15:30
 - Intelligence—Nehemiah 9:20
 - Grief—Ephesians 4:30

B. What are some Bible symbols for the Holy Spirit?

Symbols are used to describe various operations of the Spirit:

- Fire—Isaiah 4:4; Acts 2:4
- Wind—John 3:8; Acts 2:2, 3
- Water—John 7:38, 39; 1 Corinthians 10:4
- Oil—Matthew 25:3; Psalm 89:20; 1 John 2:27
- Dove—Matthew 3:16

C. Is the “Baptism with the Holy Spirit” a scriptural term?

1. Yes. It was used by John the Baptist (John 1:33), by Jesus (Acts 1:5), and by Peter (Acts 11:16).
2. It is also spoken of as being “filled with the Spirit” (Acts 2:1-4).

D. What is the initial physical evidence of receiving the baptism with the Spirit?

The evidence in the Book of Acts of receiving the Holy Spirit baptism was speaking with other tongues.

- The Day of Pentecost—Acts 2:1-4; 1:5-8; John 1:30-33. “They spake with tongues.”
- The Samaritan converts—Acts 8:5-24. What did Simon see?
- The Apostle Paul—Acts 9:17-19; 1 Corinthians 14:18.
- The Gentiles—Acts 10:44-48; 11:15-17. “They spake with tongues.”
- The Corinthians—Acts 18:1-11; 1 Corinthians 12:13, 14.
- The Ephesians—Acts 19:1-7; Ephesians 1:13. They spoke with tongues and prophesied.



E. How do we receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit?

1. We must simply receive the gifts of God. Romans 10:17; “This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, of by the hearing of faith?” (Galatians 3:2, see also v. 14).
2. A believer must come to the absolute conclusion that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is:
 - Biblical (Acts 1:5; 1:8; 8:17). “And they were filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4).
 - Necessary (Ephesians 5:17, 18).
 - Applicable for today (Mark 16:17; Acts 2:38).
 - Is an experience after salvation and sanctification (Acts 8:12; 14-17; Acts 19:16).
 - Is evidenced by speaking in tongues (Acts 2:4; 20:44-46; 19:6; Mark 16:17).
 - Beneficial (Romans 8:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 14:2, 18, 22). “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.”
3. We receive the Holy Spirit by . . .
 - Heart preparation—Acts 2:38.
 - Hearing—Luke 11:13.
 - Hunger—A great desire to be filled—Matthew 5:6; James 4:8.
 - Asking to receive—Luke 11:13.
 - Expecting to receive—As hands are laid upon you, allow the Spirit to enter fully into your being—Acts 19:6.
 - An act of faith—Acts 2:4; John 7:38-39.

Yield to any deep “welling up” within your spirit and allow that inner surge to break through in expressions of worship, praise and adoration in a language unknown to you, but meaningful to God.

II. Spiritual Gifts Inventory Tool

The ministry goal of the Peerless Road Church is that every member would be a minister! Becoming a member of Peerless Road Church is more than a ceremony. As members of the body of Christ, we commit ourselves to be the hands and feet of Christ in service to a hurting world.

Please complete the Spiritual Gifts Inventory Tool below. Through this tool, we hope that you will find what God has equipped you to do in service for Him; and we hope that you will engage in ministry both to our local church and in building God’s kingdom.



A. Instructions:

1. There are a total of 110 statements below. Please indicate whether you Strongly Agree, Agree Somewhat, are Undecided, Disagree Somewhat, or Completely Disagree with each question.
2. Transfer your answers to the profile sheet at the end of this document.
3. Total your scores for each of the gifts. Each gift will have a score between ZERO and TWENTY.
4. Order the gifts in descending order of score. Higher scores indicate your more dominant gifts.

B. Please use the following selections for your answers:

- 4 – Strongly Agree
- 3 – Agree Somewhat
- 2 – Undecided
- 1 – Disagree Somewhat
- 0 – Completely Disagree

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| (1) People seem to be willing to follow my leadership without much resistance. | 1. _____ |
| (2) I like to proclaim God’s Word to fellow Christians. | 2. _____ |
| (3) It is a joy for me to proclaim God’s plan of salvation to unchurched people. | 3. _____ |
| (4) It is enjoyable to have the responsibility of leading other people in their spiritual life. | 4. _____ |
| (5) I’m excited by helping people to discover important truths in the scriptures. | 5. _____ |
| (6) I have special joy singing praises to God either alone or with other people. | 6. _____ |
| (7) It is enjoyable to motivate people to a higher spiritual commitment. | 7. _____ |
| (8) People with spiritual problems seem to come to me for advice and counsel. | 8. _____ |
| (9) I received excellent grades in school. | 9. _____ |
| (10) There is great joy in doing little jobs around the church. | 10. _____ |
| (11) I look for opportunities to assist people in their work. | 11. _____ |
| (12) There is great joy in leading people to accomplish group goals. | 12. _____ |
| (13) I like to organize people for more effective ministry. | 13. _____ |
| (14) There is great satisfaction in giving large amounts of money for the Lord’s work. | 14. _____ |
| (15) I feel great compassion for the problems of others. | 15. _____ |
| (16) It seems easy to perceive whether a person is honest or dishonest. | 16. _____ |
| (17) I am ready to try the impossible because I have a great trust in God. | 17. _____ |
| (18) There is great joy in having people in my home. | 18. _____ |
| (19) I find that the repair and maintenance of things in my environment come easily to me. | 19. _____ |
| (20) I seem to recognize prayer needs before others. | 20. _____ |
| (21) I enjoy the opportunity to pray with and for a person who is physically ill that they may be made well. | 21. _____ |
| (22) I adapt easily in a culture different from mine. | 22. _____ |
| (23) I feel a sense of authority in my relationship to the group. | 23. _____ |
| (24) I like to proclaim the Word of God to comfort others. | 24. _____ |
| (25) I seem able to determine when the Spirit has prepared a person to receive Jesus Christ. | 25. _____ |



- (26) It is exciting to provide spiritual leadership for a congregation. 26. _____
- (27) Teaching a Bible class is one of the most enjoyable things I do
(or could do) in the church. 27. _____
- (28) God has given me the ability to play a musical instrument, and I enjoy it. 28. _____
- (29) It is a joy to give encouragement to people who are discouraged. 29. _____
- (30) I enjoy providing solutions to difficult problems in life. 30. _____
- (31) It seems easy to learn difficult truths. 31. _____
- (32) I enjoy doing routine tasks for the glory of God. 32. _____
- (33) I enjoy helping with the emergency tasks around the church. 33. _____
- (34) People seem to enjoy following me in doing an important task. 34. _____
- (35) There is joy in making important decisions. 35. _____
- (36) I find real joy in giving a generous portion of my money to the Lord. 36. _____
- (37) Visiting people in retirement homes gives me a great satisfaction. 37. _____
- (38) I seem to know very quickly whether something is right or wrong. 38. _____
- (39) When things seem impossible, I'm ready to move forward. 39. _____
- (40) I do not feel uncomfortable when people drop in unexpectedly. 40. _____
- (41) I have enjoyed creating various kinds of arts and/or crafts. 41. _____
- (42) Prayer is one of my favorite spiritual exercises. 42. _____
- (43) I have prayed for an emotionally ill person and seen the person get better. 43. _____
- (44) It is easy for me to move into a new community and make friends. 44. _____
- (45) I have little fear in leading people where God wants them to go. 45. _____
- (46) I enjoy relating and sharing God's Word to the issues of the day. 46. _____
- (47) I feel a burden to share the gospel with people. 47. _____
- (48) I like to assist people with their spiritual problems. 48. _____
- (49) It seems that people learn when I teach them. 49. _____
- (50) I have enjoyed being involved with church, school and/or local
musical productions. 50. _____
- (51) I like to encourage inactive church members to become involved Christians again. 51. _____
- (52) It seems that people generally follow my advice. 52. _____
- (53) I am able to understand difficult portions of God's Word. 53. _____
- (54) I receive great satisfaction in doing small or trivial tasks in church. 54. _____
- (55) I desire to do the tasks which will free others for important ministry. 55. _____
- (56) It is more effective to delegate a task to someone else rather than to do
it myself. 56. _____
- (57) I enjoy the responsibility for the achievement of group goals. 57. _____
- (58) I appreciate the opportunity to financially support a critical situation. 58. _____
- (59) I sense joy in comforting people in difficult situations. 59. _____
- (60) The difference between truth and error is easily perceived by me. 60. _____
- (61) I am often ready to believe God will lead us through a situation when others
feel it is impossible. 61. _____
- (62) People seem to feel very comfortable in my home. 62. _____



- (63) I like to create things with my hands. 63. _____
- (64) God consistently answers my prayers in tangible ways. 64. _____
- (65) I have visited a person who was sick, prayed that God would make them physically whole, and the person got better. 65. _____
- (66) I am able to relate well to Christians of different locations or cultures. 66. _____
- (67) I appreciate the opportunity to proclaim God’s Word to others. 67. _____
- (68) It is important for me to speak God’s Word of warning and judgment in the world today. 68. _____
- (69) It is a joy to share what Jesus means to me with an unchurched neighbor. 69. _____
- (70) People like to bring their troubles and concerns to me because they feel I care. 70. _____
- (71) One of the joys of my ministry is training people to be more effective Christians. 71. _____
- (72) I feel secure in the fact that my musical ability will be of benefit to other people with whom I come in contact. 72. _____
- (73) People who are feeling perplexed often come to me for encouragement and comfort. 73. _____
- (74) I feel that I have a special insight in selecting the best alternative in a difficult situation. 74. _____
- (75) I have a clear understanding of biblical doctrines (teachings). 75. _____
- (76) I find more satisfaction in doing a job than finding someone else to do it. 76. _____
- (77) I appreciate a ministry of helping other people to bear their burdens. 77. _____
- (78) It is a thrill to inspire others to greater involvement in church work. 78. _____
- (79) The development of effective plans for church ministry gives me great satisfaction. 79. _____
- (80) It is a joy to see how much money I can give to the Lord. 80. _____
- (81) I enjoy ministering to a person who is sick in the hospital. 81. _____
- (82) I can judge well between the truthfulness and error of a given theological statement. 82. _____
- (83) People seem to view me as one who believes everything is possible. 83. _____
- (84) When missionaries come to our church I (would) like to have them come to my home. 84. _____
- (85) I see that the results of my working with various objects in God’s creation help to improve and beautify that which other people have not seen nor developed. 85. _____
- (86) I faithfully pray for others recognizing that their effectiveness and total well-being depends on God’s answer to prayers. 86. _____
- (87) I like to participate in ministry to the physically or emotionally ill and pray for their recovery. 87. _____
- (88) The thought of beginning a new church in a new community is exciting to me. 88. _____
- (89) I enjoy training workers in the congregation. 89. _____
- (90) In a Bible class, it seems essential to share God’s Word even if it irritates others. 90. _____



- (91) I feel a deep concern for the unreached people in my community. 91. _____
- (92) I enjoy a close relationship with people in a one-to-one situation. 92. _____
- (93) It is easy to organize materials for teaching a Bible class. 93. _____
- (94) Leading others in singing songs of praise to God or for pure enjoyment is personally satisfying. 94. _____
- (95) I would rather call on a delinquent family in my church than an unchurched family. 95. _____
- (96) I have a strong sense of confidence in my solutions to problems. 96. _____
- (97) It is an exciting challenge to read and study a difficult book of the Bible. 97. _____
- (98) I like to do things without attracting much attention. 98. _____
- (99) If a family is facing a serious crisis, I enjoy the opportunity to help them. 99. _____
- (100) There is great satisfaction in having others follow me in performing a task. 100. _____
- (101) I would rather make decisions for the group than persuade them to reach the same decision. 101. _____
- (102) I can give sacrificially because I know that God will meet my needs. 102. _____
- (103) It is a special satisfaction to visit people who are confined to their homes. 103. _____
- (104) I often seek the motives of a person and look beneath the words. 104. _____
- (105) When people are discouraged, I enjoy giving them a positive vision. 105. _____
- (106) People seem to enjoy coming to my house. 106. _____
- (107) There is pleasure in drawing, designing, and/or painting various objects. 107. _____
- (108) I find myself praying when I possibly should be doing other things. 108. _____
- (109) I feel strongly that my prayers for a sick person affect wholeness for that person. 109. _____
- (110) More than most, I have a strong desire to see all people of other communities and countries won to the Lord. 110. _____

The Discovery Tool Profile Sheet

Transfer your scores for each question into the table on the following page, then compute the sum of each row.



reach



connect



grow



serve

PLEASE NOTE!!!! The numbers on this sheet go VERTICALLY, in sequential order.

To score questions 1, 23, 45, 67 and 89, add them together horizontally, giving you a grand total for the gift of Apostle. Continue this scoring through missionary gift at the bottom of the table.

This provides your score for each gift.

1. Apostle	1	23	45	67	89	=	_____
2. Prophet	2	24	46	68	90	=	_____
3. Evangelist	3	25	47	69	91	=	_____
4. Pastor	4	26	48	70	92	=	_____
5. Teacher	5	27	49	71	93	=	_____
6. Music	6	28	50	72	94	=	_____
7. Exhortation	7	29	51	73	95	=	_____
8. Wisdom	8	30	52	74	96	=	_____
9. Knowledge	9	31	53	75	97	=	_____
10. Serving	10	32	54	76	98	=	_____
11. Helps	11	33	55	77	99	=	_____
12. Leadership	12	34	56	78	100	=	_____
13. Administration	13	35	57	79	101	=	_____
14. Giving	14	36	58	80	102	=	_____
15. Mercy	15	37	59	81	103	=	_____
16. Discernment	16	38	60	82	104	=	_____
17. Faith	17	39	61	83	105	=	_____
18. Hospitality	18	40	62	84	106	=	_____
19. Craftsmanship	19	41	63	85	107	=	_____
20. Intercession	20	42	64	86	108	=	_____
21. Healing	21	43	65	87	109	=	_____
22. Missionary	22	44	66	88	110	=	_____

Name



III. Participating in Ministry

In order to help you find your place of ministry, we would like to have information about what makes you unique—your “S. H. A. P. E.” Please complete the *Personal Profile* questions on pages 44-47 and return to our office as soon as possible.

This was adapted from a book by Rick Warren to provide you with an opportunity to tell us something about you.

**“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made...”
(Psalm 139:13, 14, NIV).**

- S *Spiritual Gifts***—Each believer has received spiritual gifts to be used to edify (or build up) the entire church. **“It was He who gave some...to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up”** (Ephesians 4:11, 12, *NIV*; see also I Corinthians 12:4-11; I Peter 4:9-11). If you have taken a spiritual gifts inventory or know what your gift may be, please tell us.
- H *Heart***—God has given each of us a unique emotional “heartbeat” that races when we encounter activities, subjects, or circumstances that interest us. In the context of finding your place in the body, your heart may be defined as *“a God-given desire to make a difference somewhere.”* You may be very passionate about one subject, and another Christian may be moved by another. God has given each of us the passions that motivate us to take action. **“For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish His purpose”** (Revelation 17:17, *NIV*; see also Proverbs 4:23). The worksheet gives you the opportunity to identify your heart in two categories—people groups and subjects.
- A *Abilities***—While abilities vary among individuals, they all originated in God. **“I have filled him with the ... skill, ability, and knowledge ... to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship”** (Exodus 31:3-5, *NIV*; see also I Corinthians 12:6). In the space provided on the worksheet, please tell us about the abilities you use in your vocation or in your hobbies.
- P *Personality***—You may be an extrovert who is energized by interacting with people, or you may be an introvert whose energy is drained by group activities and replenished by time alone. **“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made”** (Psalm 139:13-14, *NIV*). Please use the space on the worksheet to give us insight into the unique personality God has given you.
- E *Experiences***—Who we are today is influenced to a large degree by our past experiences. Please tell us about the experiences related to your education, your employment, and any previous ministry positions. Finally, if you feel comfortable to do so, please tell us about any painful experiences that you feel may equip you to minister to others. **“Praise be to . . . God . . . who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God”** (2 Corinthians 1:3-4, *NIV*; see also Romans 8:28; Philippians 1:12).



Personal Profile

S Spiritual Gifts

H Heart

A Abilities

P Personality

E Experiences

S. H. A. P. E.*

*Adapted from “Discovering Your Ministry” by Rick Warren



GIFTS

If you have participated in a spiritual gifts inventory, please list below the spiritual gifts, which you feel have been entrusted to you.

HEART

In the box below, circle the types of people to whom you would most enjoy ministering:

Children	infants	teens	adults	senior citizens	
Grieving	blind	deaf	newly married	singles	couples
Parents with young children		cross-cultural groups			
Unemployed	men	women	students	disabled	
Other people groups: _____					

List below issues about which you feel strongly enough to become involved. (Examples: Christians in political offices, human rights, the environment, world hunger, financial stewardship, pro-life, life-altering/controlling issues or abuses, medical support groups, homelessness, teen pregnancy)

Below circle church issues, needs, or ministries about which you feel strongly:

Children's ministries	discipling new believers	fund-raising	
<i>Worship</i>	decorating/beautifying premises	recreation	
Visitor follow-up	community outreach	crisis intervention	
Building/equipment maintenance	music	personal witnessing	
Hospitality	greeter	public relations	Bible study
Life Group			
Other: _____			

Name



ABILITY

In the box below, circle areas in which you have some ability.

Computers *filing* child care *telephoning* cleaning organizing
 Managing music (vocal) music (instrumental) planning video
 Mechanics equipment repair research painting/drawing
 Building/equipment maintenance counseling **writing** editing
 Cooking accounting landscaping **DECORATING** drama construction
 Graphics electronics **public speaking** photography teaching
 Marketing linguistics **clerical** *audio* food preparation

Other: _____

PERSONALITY

On each line below, circle to indicate which of the descriptions you feel fits you best.

Introverted —|———|———|—— Extroverted
 Like routine —|———|———|—— Like variety
 Focus on results —|———|———|—— Focus on relationships

Describe other personality traits below:

Name _____



EXPERIENCES

Educational Experience:

List below where you attended school and which are your favorite subjects.

Work Experience:

What is your current vocation? _____

Briefly describe other types of work which you have done.

Ministry Experience:

List below your previous experience in ministry in any capacity—leader, worker, etc.

Position/Task:	No. Years
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Painful Experiences:

Describe below the kinds of problems or difficult situations in which you could relate to and encourage a fellow Christian who may be struggling.

*“And say to _____ (your name),
 See that you discharge carefully [the duties of] the ministry and fulfill the stewardship which you
 have received in the Lord” (Colossians 4:17, Amp.).*

Name



My Commitment . . .

Today's Date: _____

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Birth Date: _____ Marital Status (check a box): S M D W

Please Check the Following Spiritual Experiences That Apply to You.

- Saved Sanctified Baptized with the Holy Spirit Baptized in Water

Are you currently a member of any other congregation? _____

If yes where? _____

YES! I want to become a member of the Peerless Road Church. I have completed *Join the Journey*, and I am willing to take the covenant below in a formal service. I make a commitment to support my local church to the best of my ability in the areas outlined in *Join the Journey*.

“Will you sincerely promise in the presence of God and these witnesses that you will . . .

- Accept this Bible as the Word of God***
- Believe and practice its teachings, rightly divided, the New Testament as your rule of faith and practice, government, and discipline, and***
- Walk in the light to the best of your knowledge and ability?”***

Signature: _____

Date: _____

(Note: Please remove this completed commitment page from this manual and give to the pastor.)





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reach



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grow



serve

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