THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST

NEW MEMBERS' GUIDE

Compiled by the National Discipleship and Leadership Development Committee (NDLDC)

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New Members' Guide
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National Discipleship and Leadership Development Committee

Printed in Ghana by
Pentecost Press Limited
P. O. Box DC 803,
Dansoman - Accra
Tel: 024 491 6654 / 020 -302 3880

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1. WELCOME MESSAGE

We are very excited and happy to welcome you to The Church of Pentecost (COP) family. We are pleased to accept you into the fellowship of believers and appreciate your membership as an opportunity to partner with you in your spiritual journey with our Lord and Master Jesus. We hope you will find the love of Christ, develop deep fellowship with fellow believers so as to enhance your spiritual experience, resulting in your growth and productivity towards God.

We encourage you to prayerfully read through this material and to participate actively in the newcomers' classes meant for your orientation as a new member of the Church. It is worth noting that the Lord calls every person, just as He did with the life of Abraham, for a purpose. Your decision to join the CoP should therefore be seen as a call from God. It is our prayer that the Lord himself will guide you and establish you in His purpose, to find your place in the body of Christ.

2. INTRODUCTION

Every organisation has certain distinctive attributes that distinguish it from others. The Church, and, for that matter, The Church of Pentecost, is no different. Thus, this study is designed for new members in the Church to better acquaint themselves with who we are as a church, what we believe, and how we uphold our beliefs and governance system. The primary purpose of this manual is to integrate into the CoP family our new members who were non-CoP Christians elsewhere but have decided to join the CoP.

It is expected that taking newcomers in the Church through the study outline in this manual would keep them abreast with the beliefs, practices, and governance system of the CoP, and also nurture them into spiritual maturity as required of the members of the Church.

The newcomers will also be asked to fill the membership form which will be presented to them to provide any required information about them to the local leadership of the Church. The form will also help the new members to

make a declaration of their acceptance of the doctrines and practices of the Church, and their willingness to abide by them.

We believe graduates of this class will have a fulfilling and blessed Christian and ministry experience that will enhance their growth in The Church of Pentecost.

3. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST

The Church of Pentecost had very humble beginnings dating back to the dedicated ministry of Pastor James McKeown (1900-1989).

An Irish Missionary sent by the Apostolic Church, Bradford, UK, to the then Gold Coast (now Ghana) in 1937,Pastor McKeown came to nurture a group of believers of the Apostolic Faith yearning for the fruit and power of the Holy Spirit.

The group was based in Asamankese, a town in the Eastern Region of Ghana led by one Peter Newman Anim.

The group split in 1939 under doctrinal differences into the Christ Apostolic Church

and the Apostolic Church, Gold Coast. The latter grew rapidly under Pastor James McKeown. A Constitutional crisis in the Church in 1953 led to the founding of the Gold Coast Apostolic Church with Pastor James McKeown as leader.

On the Gold Coast's attainment of independence in 1957 and its adoption of the name Ghana, the Gold Coast Apostolic Church was renamed the Ghana Apostolic Church. The Church later adopted the name "The Church of Pentecost" on August 1, 1962.

4. THE CHURCH'S MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

Vision Statement: To become a global Pentecostal church that is culturally relevant in vibrant evangelism, church planting, discipleship and holistic ministry.

Mission Statement: We exist to establish healthy, responsible and self-sustainable churches, filled with committed, Spirit-filled Christians of character, who will impact their communities for Christ.

5. THE CHURCH'S BELIEFS (THE TENETS OF THE CHURCH)

a. **THE BIBLE:** We believe in the divine inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures. We believe that the Bible is infallible in its declaration, final in its authority, all-sufficient in its provisions and comprehensive in its sufficiency (2Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21).

b. **THE ONE TRUE GOD:** We believe in the existence of the One True God, Elohim, Maker of the whole universe; indefinable, but revealed as the Triune Godhead - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - One in nature, essence and attributes; Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent (Genesis 1:1; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

c. **THE DEPRAVED NATURE OF HUMANITY:** We believe that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Genesis 3:1-19; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:23), and are subject to eternal punishment (Matthew 13:41, 42; Romans 6:23), and need Repentance (Acts 2:38; Matthew 4:17; Acts 20:21) and Regeneration (John 3:3,5; Titus 3:5).

d. **THE SAVIOUR:** We believe that humanity's need of a Saviour has been met in the person of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:21; John 4:42; Acts 2:36; Ephesians 5:23; Philippians 2:6-11), because of His Deity (Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1; John 20:38; Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13,14), Virgin Birth (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:25-27), Sinless Life (John 8:46; Hebrews 4:15; 2 Corinthians 5:21), Atoning Death (Romans 3:25; Hebrews 9:22; 1John 2:2), Resurrection (Matthew 28:5-7; Acts 2:24; Acts 2:36; Acts 10:39,40; 1 Corinthians 15:3,4) and Ascension (Acts 1:9-11; Acts 2:33-36), His Abiding Intercession (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25) and His Second Coming to judge the living and the dead (Acts 1:11; Acts 10:42; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; 2 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 22:12, 20).

e. **REPENTANCE, JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION:**

We believe all humanity have to repent of and confess their sins before God (Luke 15:7; Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30), and believe in the vicarious death of Jesus Christ to be justified before God (Romans 4:25; Romans 5:1). We believe

in the sanctification of the believer through the working of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 1:30; 1 Corinthians 6:11) and in God's gift of eternal life to the believer (John 17:2,3; John 10:27, 28; Romans 6:23b; 1 John 5:11-13).

f. **THE ORDINANCES OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER:** We believe in the ordinance of Baptism by immersion as a testimony of a convert who has attained a responsible age of about 13 years (Matthew 3:16; Matthew 28:19; Mark 1:9, 10; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Infants and children are not baptized but are dedicated to the Lord (Mark 10:13-16; Luke 2:22-24,34). We believe in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion, which should be partaken by all members who are in full fellowship (Luke 22:19-20; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-33).

g. **BAPTISM, GIFTS AND FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:** We believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit for all believers with initial evidence of speaking in tongues (Joel 2:28,29, Ac. 2:3,4, 38, 39; 10:44-46; 19:1-6) also in the operation of the gifts and the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers (1 Corinthians

12:8-11, 28:30; Romans 12:6-8, Galatians 5:22-23).

h. **DIVINE HEALING:** We believe that the healing of sickness and disease is provided for God's people in the atonement. The Church is, however, not opposed to soliciting the help of qualified medical practitioners (2 Kings 20:7; Matthew 9:12; Luke 10:34; Colossians 4:14).

i. **TITHES AND OFFERING:** We believe in tithing and in the giving of free-will offerings towards the cause of carrying forward the Kingdom of God. We believe that God blesses a cheerful giver (Genesis 14:18-20; 28:20-22; Malachi 3:6-10; Matthew 23:23; Acts 20:35; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; 2 Corinthians 9:1-9).

j. **THE SECOND COMING AND THE NEXT LIFE:** We believe in the Second Coming of Christ and the Resurrection of the dead, both the saved and the unsaved - they that are saved, to the resurrection of life; and the unsaved, to the resurrection of damnation (Mark 13: 26; Daniel 12:2; John 5: 28-29; Acts 1:11; 10:42; Romans 2:7-11; 6:23).

k. **MARRIAGE AND FAMILY:** We believe in the institution of marriage as a union established and ordained by God for the lifelong, intimate relationship between a man as husband and a woman as wife as biologically defined at birth. We believe that God instituted marriage primarily for mutual help, fellowship and comfort that one ought to have for the other and for honourable procreation of children, and their training in love, obedience to the Lord and responsible citizenship. (Genesis 2:18, 21-25; Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 7:1-2).

6. THE CHURCH'S CORE VALUES, PRACTICES, AND RULES OF CONDUCT

Evangelism

It is the presentation of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit with the view that people will trust Jesus as Saviour and Lord and serve Him in the fellowship of the Church. Evangelism is the responsibility of every Church member and Minister. It is the prime duty of every believer to share their faith after conversion. Through cross-cultural, mission-oriented evangelism, Church members who travel to other countries

preach Christ, plant churches and call for ministers to pastor same. Besides, as was the practice of the Founder, Pastor James McKeown, we respond to calls to missions as led by the Holy Spirit.

Discipleship

Discipleship is teaching and training believers to be like Christ in character and to make responsible choices. The emphasis is on holiness, righteousness, faithfulness, honesty, sincerity, humility, prayerfulness and the leading of disciplined and responsible lives. This is done at the level of individuals, where mature members take up the responsibility to disciple new converts. The Church plays a leading role by providing systematic teaching and practical training. Such teaching emphasises the four-square gospel, which is Christ-centered: i.e. Jesus the Saviour, Healer, Baptiser and Soon-Coming King; the Tenets of the Church; Bible reading, study and scripture memorisation and application of the word to life situations.

Ministry Excellence

We seek to honour God who gave His best (Christ Jesus as the Saviour) by maintaining a high standard of excellence in all our ministries and activities (Col. 3:23-24).

Prayer

Some of the normal practices are regular prayer for the Holy Spirit baptism with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues. Emphasis is placed on the fruit and gifts of the Spirit in the life of the believer. Prayers are said for healing and deliverance of the afflicted as part of the initial exercises for salvation. Services are marked as truly Pentecostal with praise and worship, teaching, exercise of gifts, prayer, testimonies, etc.

Ministry of The Holy Spirit

We believe in the presence of the person of the Holy Spirit and that the Christian life can be led only by His enablement. The new birth is the work of the Holy Spirit, and then the baptism in the Holy Spirit for power to serve and the

gifts of the Spirit for building the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit helps the individual to develop a Christlike character, manifested through bearing the fruit of the Spirit. The leading of the Holy Spirit in all spheres of activity in the Church is paramount. Administrative structures and all other Church distinctiveness have been largely influenced by the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Leadership Development

Leadership development is based on the apostolic foundation. Appointments and callings into leadership positions are based on character, charisma, and the leading of the Holy Spirit. Leadership development is from the grassroots level with members maturing to lead sub-groups, Ministries, Assemblies, Districts and Areas. Team spirit with talent development shapes team work. Ministry is by both clergy and laity.

Church Culture

The following distinctive attributes help identify The Church of Pentecost:

a. Self-supporting attitude

b. Faithfulness and integrity

c. Distinctiveness in prayer

d. Church discipline without fear or favour irrespective of position, race or colour of members.

e. Congregational worship is based on spirit and truth and not necessarily on location or structure.

f. Fellowship and generosity

g. Respect for authority.

h. Mutual respect and sense of belonging for all members without discrimination based on colour, gender, tribe, race or nationality.

i. Sacrificial service to the Church without expecting pecuniary reward.

j, Neighbourhood Churches: small/medium-sized community-based church policy promotes Church planting.

k. Home cell system of fellowship fosters the creation of avenues for effective discipleship and promotes both numerical and spiritual growth.

l. Total abstinence from alcohol, tobacco and other hard drugs.

m. Monogamous marriage is upheld as well as chastity before marriage.

n. Homosexuality, lesbianism and other perverse sexual practices are not permitted in the Church.

o. The Church upholds paternal inheritance.

p. Female visitors who attend Church services without a head-covering should be accepted as they are, without being either turned back or offered a 'head covering'.

q. Women should fashion their hairstyles in a decent, modest and appropriate manner to the glory of God. The wearing of seductive or sexually-provocative dresses should be discouraged in the Church.

r. Women must avoid the practice of cleavage (the partial exposure of breasts and other sensitive parts of the body) as that does not glorify the Lord.

s. Church Anniversaries can be celebrated only at the 10th, 25th, 50th, 75th, etc. milestones.

t. Tithes and Offering: Faithfulness in giving offerings and paying tithes to enhance the ministry of the Church is emphasised. Periodic teaching on this subject is regarded as very important. The Church and members depend solely on God as the source of financial supply. Borrowing by the Church is not encouraged. Lending with interest among members is also discouraged.

Social Activities

The Church believes in communal living with members supporting one another, and participating in communal work. The Church may also help the wider community by providing social needs such as health services, education, as well as donating to the needy in society.

Holiness of members and officers

a. The Church upholds holiness of members unto the Lord in all their endeavours (Rom. 12:1; Heb. 12:14).

b. Consistent Bible Teaching (Ac. 2:42a).

c. The Church upholds the teaching of sound biblical doctrine and does not tolerate the propagation of wrong/false doctrine.

d. All types of prayer, such as thanksgiving; worship (adoration); supplication; intercession (Eph. 6:18-19; 1 Tim. 2:1-2)

e. Church Discipline (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 12:7-11).

f. Respect for and obedience to authority.

g. Submission to corrective measures and policies of the Church.

h. Regular fellowship of the saints (Ac. 2:42-47; Heb. 10:25).

RULES OF CONDUCT

The Church is the household of God, redeemed and sanctified by the blood of Jesus Christ. The Church is therefore, not a mere social institution, but a family of saints being trained and equipped until we all attain the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13). The following guidelines are, therefore, intended to help you walk worthy of your calling as a child of God:

a. Set aside a period daily for a personal quiet time in prayer and meditation on the Word (Matt. 6:6; Eph. 6:18-20).

b. Always endeavour to adequately prepare yourself through prayer and meditation before coming to the house of God (Heb. 4:15-16).

c. Be in your seat in good time before the commencement of service and participate fully in every aspect of the service.

d. Endeavour, by word and deed, to bring up your children in the fear of the LORD, and bring them with you to the house of

God. Supervise and monitor the active participation of your children in Sunday School and Youth Ministry, as the case may be. Do not neglect the spiritual well-being of the other relatives and house-helps under your care; they also need salvation (Gen. 18:19; Jos. 24:15; 2 Tim. 1:5, 6; Prov. 22:6; Deut. 6:4-7).

e. Take the Pastor as your own friend. He needs your compassion, help and advice as you also need his. Pray for him always. (Heb. 13:17, 18; Rom. 15:30-32; Mal.2:7)

f. Make the Church your spiritual home. Love the brethren with brotherly affection and, if you are able, contribute to the needs of the saints (Phil. verse 7; Ac. 2:46).

g. During casual conversation at home or at work, do not speak disrespectfully or disparagingly about the Church and God's servants. Make your concerns and grievances known to the appropriate authority for explanation or redress (3 Jn. 9,10; Num. 12:12).

h. Endeavour to study the Bible diligently on your own and take it with you anytime you go to the house of God (2 Tim. 2:15; Ac. 17:11; Jos. 1:8).

i. Enter reverently; pray fervently; listen attentively; give praise from a grateful heart, and worship God in the beauty of holiness (Ps. 118:27-29; Eccl. 5:1; Rom. 7:12; Jas. 1:19). 'Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise; be thankful unto Him and bless His name' (Ps. 100:4).

j. Marital fidelity and chastity before and during marriage are the hallmarks of a true Christian and are, therefore, strongly urged upon every child of God. Pre-marital and extra-marital relationships have no place in the Church of God; members found in such relationships should be punished by suspension and/or withdrawal from fellowship (1 Cor. 5; Heb. 13:4).

k. In your business, endeavour to make all your dealings and transactions Bible-based, honest and transparent (Prov. 16:8, 21:6, 22:13, 16, Jer. 17:11, 22:13). A true child of God should not deal in items known to be detrimental to the spiritual, mental and physical health of others, e.g., alcohol, cigarettes and narcotic drugs.

7. GOD'S COVENANT WITH THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST

The Covenant

The Church of Pentecost has a divine destiny. It is marked out distinctively by her unique covenant and relationship with God.

God's Part

God's first Covenant with The Church of Pentecost dates back as far as 1931. This was confirmed in 1940 at the Easter Convention in Winneba and was re-confirmed at the 1948 General Convention at Koforidua. 'It is not because of how few or many you are in membership but according to My divine and eternal purpose and goodwill for My Church.'

a. That God would raise a nation out of Africa that would be a spearhead and light to the world, heralding the Second Coming of Jesus our Lord.

b. That the Gold Coast has been chosen to fulfil this eternal will and purpose of God.

c. That God would accomplish this through a white missionary in future, and the group would, through many trials, tribulations, temptations, and persecutions be nurtured, protected and grow up spiritually and numerically, and become a great international Pentecostal Church, which would send out missionaries from the country, the Gold Coast, to all parts of Africa and the world as a whole.

d. He God would call out men according to His own choice from time to time.

e. That God would ensure that 'No weapon that is formed against the Church will prosper, and every tongue that rises against it in judgment shall be condemned. For this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord,

and their righteousness is of Him,' says the Lord.

f. That God would meet the Church's financial needs in season and out of season for all other Churches to acknowledge that His divine presence, blessings and glory are with the Church.

g. That He would pour abundant spiritual gifts on both men and women.

h. That God would from time to time prune and purge His Church of all parasites, pests, personality cults, false doctrines, social and religious evil in order to make her holy and radiant. This will portray His divine presence, radiance and glory in her spiritual and physical performances, so as to avoid spiritual decline and apostasy.

The Church's Part

a. That the Church would know and understand His ways and obey His voice and commandments, so that the Church would keep herself holy, blameless and pure.

b. That the Church would make disciples for the soon-coming Christ.

c. That the Church is not to love and learn the things of the world nor its ways, for His ways are different from the ways of the world. Therefore, she should not imitate worldliness or any form of religious sects, organisations or 'Churches' for He has chosen the Church to be holy, righteous, faithful, humble and obedient. She should be a different model and a peculiar people, to show forth His divine virtues to angels.

d. That the Church should not be covetous, money-minded, selfish, proud, arrogant and stubborn in her ways.

e. That in order to have a pure, disciplined, holy Church (which can stand the test of time), holiness should become her watchword throughout her entire life.

f. That the Church should not owe any man, borrow or seek financial aid, loans or grants from anywhere as God is her eternal riches,

treasury, and that He is able to sustain the Church in all her needs.

g. That the gifts that would be given by God must be controlled so that Satan would not use them to his advantage.

h. That the Church should remember not to harbour sins, evil deeds and evil people among her membership, but rebuke, discipline and restore backsliders in the spirit of love, compassion and patience. For if the Church would hearken to His voice and obey His precepts, she would be blessed among her peers.

8. BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST

Basically, one can become a member of the The Church of Pentecost in (3) three ways;

a. As a New-Testament-Bible-believing-church that upholds the commands of Christ, the basic mode of entrance into the local church of the CoP is through acceptance of Christ as one's Lord and personal Saviour

as well as baptism by immersion. The Bible says, 'That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved' (Rom. 10:9, NKJV).

b. Furthermore, one who was born into the Church and remains a child/member of the Church from his or her infancy may also need to pass through this same process. Once they attain thirteen years or more, the child would now be guided to accept Christ as their Lord and personal Saviour leading to their baptism by immersion.

Once this child is baptised, they are enrolled into the adult membership of the Church and can now be discipled into various leadership positions of the Church. The person's nurturing into maturity also takes place at this stage. A right hand of fellowship is extended to them after the water baptism, and those who are prepared for the Lord's Supper are given the opportunity to partake of the Lord's Supper.

c. Again, a member from any church in the Pentecostal fraternity who upholds similar doctrines as The Church of Pentecost and has been baptised by immersion in their former church may be accepted into full membership by the extension of the right hand of fellowship after going through the New Members' Class.

Continued full membership shall, however, depend on living a righteous life in accordance with the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ and obedience to the core practices of the Church.

9. MINISTRIES AND AUXILIARY MINISTRIES

Traditionally, the CoP has five main ministries (the Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Evangelism Ministry, Women's Ministry and Pentecost Men's Ministry). There are, however, many other auxiliary ones such as the music, ushering, discipleship, follow up, etc. These ministries apart from grooming members, also

serve as avenues for service and doing ministry in the church. Leadership of the local church must assist new members to know what these structures are, where they fit in and how the processes work so as to provide everyone the opportunity to be involved in ministry.

10. SCHEDULED MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS IN A MONTH

a. **Weekday Service:** Apart from designated weeks for special programs, the local church meets on Wednesday and Fridays for teachings and prayer.

b. **Communion Service:** This is observed on the first Sunday of every month. Monthly tithes are expected to be paid on this day. Also, missions offering is given to support the work of missions.

c. **Gospel Sunday:** This is scheduled for the last Sunday of the month. This is a day dedicated to the preaching of the gospel and soul-winning both within and outside the church premise.

d. **Sunday Morning Service:** The main day of meeting in The Church of Pentecost is Sunday morning with differnt times of meeting according to the church.

e. **Home Cell Meetings:** Cell meetings are held on the Sunday preceding the Communion Sunday.

f. **Ministry Week:** The last week of the month, which is the week preceding the communion week is set aside for meetings of the afore-mentioned ministries of the church. Specifically, the schedule is as follows: Monday – Youth Ministry; Tuesday – Women's Ministry; Wednesday – Evangelism Ministry (program for the whole Church); Thursday – Pentecost Men's Ministry while Fridays in the Ministry weeks are designated for joint services for a specific Ministry.

In addition to these programs, there are designated weeks on the church's calendar for the National, Area, District, Local Church and Ministries.

11. GOVERNANCE SYSTEM AND STRUCTURES OF THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST

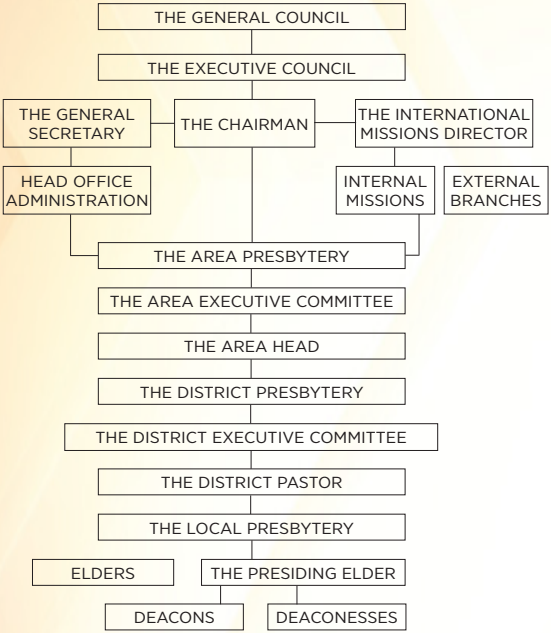
Church government is a necessary concept for the prudent management of every church. As every church grows with various kinds of ministries, committees, and other administrative demands, there is equally the need to set up a prudent governance system and structures that will guide the church in its activities. Although in Colossians 1:8, it is stated that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church, He has also vested His power and authority into persons in authority in the church to govern it to His likeness (Ac. 14:23; 20:28; Tit. 1:5).

By church government, we believe that Christ, the owner of the Church (Matt. 16:17) calls people into His church, assigns them with specific leadership responsibilities, and expect them to govern the church in accordance with His will. It is against this backdrop that the CoP also has a very prudent and strong governance system that has kept the Church thus far. Members of the Church are required to have, at least, basic information and knowledge of

the Church's governance system as well as its structures. In this section, we shall look at the organogram of the Church.

12. THE ORGANOGRAM OF THE CoP's GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS

THE ORGANOGRAM OF THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST



13. GUIDELINES FOR ORGANISING THE NEW MEMBERS' CLASS

1. **Mandate:** In the Vision 2023 Document, there is provision made for the formation of a New Members' Class in every local assembly. This is to ensure that every member of the CoP (old and new) is of one mind in terms of vision and mission, one heart in terms of doctrine and practice, and of one passion in terms of values and ministry.

2. Organising The New Members' Class

The following are guidelines for effective organisation of the class;

a. The usual weekly Welcome Session for visitors to the local assembly should continue. Basic information of those who want to join the local assembly should be taken and handed to the Presiding Elder or Follow-up Team leader.

b. Visitors who express interest to join the local assembly should be followed up within 48 hours by the Follow-up Team

and Visitation Team. They should all be linked to the nearest Home Cell for continuous follow-up. New members who are already born-again and maturing should wait for the next New Members' Class while the new converts amongst them join the New Converts' class.

c. The New Members should be informed of the next New Members' Class and the need for them to attend in order to be assimilated into the local church. Their admission to full membership is conditional on their full participation in the orientation program.

3. As prospective new members wait for the next class, the Home Cell leader should:

a. Ascertain their true conversion status. If they encounter cases where the conversion experience of some prospective new members is doubtful, they should help them accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and personal Saviour. Subsequently, such

persons can be presented for baptism by immersion.

b. Enquire whether they have been baptised in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. Those who have not yet had the experience should be helped by the local church to receive the Holy Spirit baptism.

c. Find out why they want to join the CoP in that particular local assembly/District.

d. Encourage them to get all documents needed to authenticate their membership status, e.g., baptismal cards, transfer cards etc.

e. Check and verify all their background information.

3.1 It is recommended that periodically, (preferably, bimonthly), all persons who visited in the last two months be mobilised to attend the New Members' Class. Their Home Cell leaders should help bring them to class.

3.2 It is suggested that there should be a total of 6 (six) meetings held (preferably held during Sunday Bible Study period or after Sunday service). Five of the meetings could be held at the local level and the final meeting at the District level, where all new members from the local assemblies meet at a central point. Where this is not feasible, the leadership can consider what is most convenient in their context.

3.3 The essence of the local level meetings is to go through the New Members' Class manual. The District level meeting is to enable new members engage with the District Minister and also ask pertinent questions for clarification.

3.4 Ideally, the local level and district level meetings should be chaired by the Presiding Elder and District Minister, respectively.

3.5 When all membership requirements have been cleared, the new members could be introduced at the next Communion

Service by extending to them the right hand of fellowship after their meeting with the Pastor. This attests to the fact that, they have fulfilled all membership requirements and are thus integrated into the assembly.

3.6 It is at this point that their names can be written in the church register.

3.7 The District Minister should communicate the next District level class with the local Assemblies through various media such as Speakers' Plan.

3.8 The meetings should be brief and straight to the point, approximately 40-50 minutes per session. The local assembly should consider refreshing members of the class if the class is held after church service.

3.9 If for any reason, a person is unavailable for the registered class, they could be re-assigned to attend the next available class. It is mandatory, however, for every Christian (non-CoP) who intends to join

the CoP to attend all the New Members' Class sessions.

3.10 In order to enhance effectiveness, a New Members' Class Team could be formed at both the local and district levels to handle this class.

3.11 The New Members' Class Team should collate information concerning new members from the Home Cell leaders so as to review them before the class begins.

14. PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR THE CLASS SESSION

a. The New Members' Class Team (NMCT) should set up the venue ahead of time.

b. The NMCT should arrive early and welcome the new members as they arrive.

c. The class could begin with a brief prayer.

d. The team and class participants should introduce themselves. They could be asked to describe their experience with the CoP so far.

e. Each class session could handle an aspect of the lessons outlined in the manual according to the context of the persons in the class. However, all the lessons should be handled.

f. The new members could be asked to indicate their ministry interests, skill set and giftings. However, care must be taken not to rush to assign them responsibilities.

g. Pray with them over issues and concerns that may have come out of the various interactions.

h. Share the benediction with them.

i. Wait until they are all gone before you leave. Someone may need to speak with you in private.

j. At the next meeting, reintroduce yourself and recap previous lesson. Show interest in their activities during the past days, weeks or month.

15. CONCLUSION

The underlying motivation for this manual is to intentionally facilitate the assimilation and integration of newcomers into the local churches of The Church of Pentecost. By going through this manual, we are confident that new members in the church would be fully informed about the doctrine, distinctive character, organizational structure, avenues of ministry involvement and expectations for every member of the church. It is our hope and prayer that you shall remain true to the faith, loyal to The Church of Pentecost and become an agent of transformation through discipleship.

APPENDIX

The following questions may be asked to enable the local church identify peculiar needs of new members pertaining to water baptism and rededication as well as spiritual gifts, talents, passion and special interests for placement in ministry teams in the local assembly.

i. What brings you to this family of Christians?

ii. Have you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Saviour?

iii. Have you been baptized by immersion?

iv. Do you accept the doctrinal stance of The Church of Pentecost as expressed in the tenets?

v. What particular thing would you want to be addressed to make your stay more fulfilling?

vi. In which area of ministry can you be of use to the Church?

CONTACT

In case of any futher questions, kindly contact your local Presiding Elder or your District Pastor. However, you can also contact:

Pastor Henry Ako-Nai (0244889792)

OR

Aps. Vincent Anane Denteh (0555874497)