



THE ELDER'S INTERCOM NEWSLETTER

**An In-House Informational and Educational Newsletter
From the Church Elder To The Members of this House of Living Stone**

WHAT IS HOLINESS? (IT'S BETTER THAN YOU THINK)

MAY 23, 2012 BY PAUL ELLIS

"Holiness is avoiding sin. It's being set apart from the world and staying undefiled." Or so we've been told. The problem with defining holiness like this is that it doesn't actually describe a God who is holy. God was holy long before there was any sin to avoid. He was unblemished long before there were blemishes.

So What Is Holiness?

Holiness means wholeness. To say that "**God is holy**" is to refer to the wholeness, fullness, beauty, and abundant life that overflows within the Godhead. God lacks nothing. He is unbroken, undamaged, unfallen, completely complete and entire within Himself. He is the indivisible One, wholly self-sufficient, and the picture of perfection.

Holiness is not one aspect of God's character; it is the whole package in glorious unity.

This is how Spurgeon describes it in his discourse on **Psalm 99:5**:

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Holiness is the harmony of all the virtues. The Lord has not one glorious attribute alone, or in excess, but all glories are in Him as a whole; this is the crown of His honour and the honour of His crown. His power is not His choicest jewel, nor His sovereignty, but His holiness. In this all comprehensive moral excellence He would have His creatures take delight, and when they do so their delight is evidence that their hearts have been renewed, and they themselves have been made partakers of His holiness.

Holiness means perfection in the sense of completion. When Jesus the Holy One came exhorting us to “Be perfect,” He was inviting us to a life of wholeness and holiness (see **Matthew 5:48**). The Greek word for “perfect” means “complete” or “whole.” Jesus was saying, “Be whole as your Father in heaven is whole.” Jesus came to make broken people whole. He was calling us to the life that was His.

A holy and whole God stands in contrast to an unholy and broken world. Because of sin and separation we live in a world of death and scarcity. In our natural state we are consumed with our needs and lack. We spend our lives trying to get what we don't have and trying to repair the damage of our estrangement. But the only cure for our brokenness is a revelation of a whole and holy God who lacks nothing and who has promised to supply all our needs out of His overflowing sufficiency.

Those in Christ ought to know better. We are to worship God in the beauty of His holiness yet much of what passes for worship is nothing more than griping about our ugliness. To the degree that we are conscious of our needs over His provision, we don't get it. We don't understand all that Christ accomplished on our behalf. The Bible declares we were sanctified (**1 Corinthians 6:11**); we have been made holy through His sacrifice and perfected forever (**Hebrews 10:10,14**); and we are complete in Christ (**Colossians 2:10**). In Him we lack absolutely nothing. Yet we run here and there to trying to gain what we already possess and speaking the faithless language of lack and longing.

We need to change our vocabulary. We need to start walking in our true identity of holiness. We need to thank Him for who He is and what He's done. Here is a simple idea to help you do that. Whenever you read the words “holy” or “sanctified” in Scripture, replace them with the heavenly language of wholeness and completion. This will give you a clearer insight into what Jesus has accomplished:

To the Church of God in Corinth, to those complete in Christ Jesus and called to be whole.
(1 Corinthians 1:2)

Put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and wholeness. (Ephesians 4:24)

So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord... who has saved us and called us to a whole and complete life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace.
(2 Timothy 1:9)

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a whole nation, a people belonging to God. (1 Peter 2:9)

But now since you have been set free from sin and have become the slaves of God, you have your present reward in wholeness and its end is eternal life.
(Romans 6:22, AMP)

Jesus gives us a picture of a whole and holy life, unbroken and unstained by sin. Everything Jesus does is prefaced by holiness. His is a holy love, a holy righteousness, a holy joy. Holiness, or wholeness, is the very definition of abundant life. Such is the life you already have in Him. —

Question: “What does the Bible say about holiness? What does it mean to be holy?”

Answer: In 1 Peter 1:13-16, Peter writes to believers, “**Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’**” Peter is quoting from Leviticus 11:44 and Leviticus 19:2.

First, let’s look at God’s holiness. What does it mean that God is holy? Passages like 1 Samuel 2:2 and Isaiah 6:3 are just two of many examples of passages about God’s holiness. Another way to say it is absolute perfection.

- God is unlike any other (see **Hosea 11:9**), and His holiness is the essence of that “otherness.”
- His very being is completely absent of even a trace of sin (**James 1:13; Hebrews 6:18**).
- He is high above any other, and no one can compare to Him (**Psalms 40:5**).

God’s holiness pervades His entire being and shapes all His attributes. His love is a holy love, His mercy is holy mercy, and even His anger and wrath are holy anger and holy wrath. These concepts are difficult for humans to grasp, just as God is difficult for us to understand in His entirety.

Next, what does it mean for us to be holy? When God told Israel to be holy in Leviticus 11 and 19, He was instructing them to be distinct from the other nations by giving them specific regulations to govern their lives. Israel is God’s chosen nation and God has set them apart from all other people groups. They are His special people, and consequently they were given standards that God wanted them to live by so the world would know they belonged to Him. When Peter repeats the Lord’s words in **1 Peter 1:16**, he is talking specifically to believers.

As believers, we need to be “**set apart**” from the world unto the Lord. We need to be living by God’s standards, not the world’s. God isn’t calling us to be perfect, but to be distinct from the world. **1 Peter 2:9** describes believers as “**a holy nation**.” It is a fact! We are separated from the world; we need to live out that reality in our day-to-day lives, which Peter tells us how to do in **1 Peter 1:13-16**.

Finally, how can we become holy? Holiness only results from a right relationship with God by believing in Jesus Christ as Savior (accepting His gift of eternal life). If we have not placed our faith in God’s Son alone to save us from our sins, then our pursuit of holiness is in vain. So, we must first make sure we are born-again believers (see **John 3**).

If we truly are believers, then we recognize that our position in Christ automatically sets us apart from the world (**1 Peter 2:9**). After all, we have a relationship with the living God! Then we must daily live a set-apart life, not trying to “blend in” with the world, but instead living according to God’s Word as we study the Bible and grow in it.

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WHERE DID THE SYSTEM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT THAT WE TRADITIONALLY USE COME FROM?



Where did the system of government that we practice in the African American Baptist Church come from? Where did we get “congregational voting” or majority rule on matters regarding the direction of the Church come from if it is not anywhere in the Scriptures? Where did we develop the system of government where the pastors of the congregation are subject to the dictates of other officers of the congregation and lead at their approval? Have you seen this before? Is this familiar when it comes the Churches that you have been in?

While the system of which we speak is preferable to many and is comfortable for most, our sincere question is this: **Is this the way Jesus intended His Church to be set up?** The second question that must be asked is this one: **Is this really the Church of Jesus Christ, or is this “our” Church?**

Well, you may be shocked to find out where many of our traditions regarding Church government and leadership come from. While these traditions have evolved through many years of practice, opinion, intermingled Scripture and sometimes a misinterpretation of Scripture or a lack of clarity regarding the cultural context of a Scriptural text, as well as other factors that have influenced this culture we know as “Church,” you may be shocked to find out where these traditions actually come from. We’ll just give you a brief history on how the Ecclesiastical government we practice actually came into being.


A SYNOPSIS ON BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

We will begin our brief historical discussion with a **synopsis of Biblical leadership** first.

The position of Pastor is one of the Ascension gifts. The position of Elder is one of oversight. The two are combined in the office that we generally refer to as the “Pastor.”

What is the Elder’s Responsibility? For that, we will look at a passage from Paul’s letter to Titus, who was the Bishop of the city of Crete. [A manual entitled “**Elders**” is also forthcoming that lays out in detail and gives a history of this position and how it is viewed in the New Testament Church from a Biblical perspective]

To Titus, my true child according to a common (general) faith: Grace (favor and spiritual blessing) and [heart] peace from God the Father and the Lord Christ Jesus our Savior. **For this reason I left you [behind] in Crete, that you might set right what was defective and finish what was left undone, and that you might appoint elders and set them over the Churches (assemblies) in every city as I directed you.** [These elders should be] men who are of unquestionable integrity and are irreproachable, the husband of [but] one



wife, whose children are [well trained and are] believers, not open to the accusation of being loose in morals and conduct or unruly and disorderly. **For the bishop** (an overseer) as God's steward must be blameless, not self-willed or arrogant or presumptuous; he must not be quick-tempered or given to drink or pugnacious (brawling, violent); he must not be grasping and greedy for filthy lucre (financial gain); But he must be hospitable (loving and a friend to believers, especially to strangers and foreigners); [he must be] a lover of goodness [of good people and good things], sober-minded (sensible, discreet), upright and fair-minded, a devout man and religiously correct, temperate and keeping himself in hand. **He must hold fast to the sure and trustworthy Word of God as he was taught it, so that he may be able both to give stimulating instruction and encouragement in sound (wholesome) doctrine and to refute and convict those who contradict and oppose it [showing the wayward their error].** Titus 1:4-9 Amplified Bible (AMP)

Where Was Ultimate Executive Authority Placed by the Holy Spirit in the Church? It was placed in and through the Ascension Gifts found in Ephesians chapter 4. We're clear on that point. But just as a reminder, what gifts then occupy this office?

And His gifts were [varied; He Himself appointed and gave men to us] some to be **apostles (special messengers), some prophets (inspired preachers and expounders), some evangelists (preachers of the Gospel, traveling**

missionaries), some pastors (shepherds of His flock) and teachers. His intention was **the perfecting and the full equipping of the saints** (His consecrated people), [that they should do] **the work of ministering toward building up Christ's body** (the Church), [That it might develop] **until we all attain oneness in the faith and in the comprehension of the** [full and accurate] **knowledge of the Son of God,** Excerpt from Ephesians 4:11,12

This is why when congregations look for a leader or a Pastor, they begin the search with the prophetic gift which includes "preaching." It is in this gift and the giftings we find in Ephesians chapter 4 that, the seat of Executive stewardship necessary to the existence of a congregation, as well as its growth and development, are found. There is no Church if there are no Ascension Gifts.

What is God's command regarding the reaction of the saints to those who are given the gifts to occupy spiritual and executive oversight?

Obey your spiritual leaders and submit to them [continually recognizing their authority over you], for they are constantly keeping watch over your souls and guarding your spiritual welfare, as men who will have to render an account [of their trust]. [Do your part to] let them do this with gladness and not with sighing and groaning, for that would not be profitable to you [either]. Hebrews 13:17 Amplified Bible (AMP)

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What then is the modeled response in Scripture of the Church to the gifts occupying that office?

Therefore those who accepted and welcomed his message were baptized, and there were added that day about 3,000 souls. And they steadfastly persevered, **devoting themselves constantly to the instruction and fellowship of the apostles, to the breaking of bread [including the Lord's Supper] and prayers.** And a sense of awe (reverential fear) came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were performed through the apostles (the special messengers). And all who believed (who adhered to and trusted in and relied on Jesus Christ) were united and [together] they had everything in common; And they sold their possessions (both their landed property and their movable goods) and distributed the price among all, according as any had need. And day after day they regularly assembled in the temple with united purpose, and in their homes they broke bread [including the Lord's Supper]. They partook of their food with gladness and simplicity and generous hearts, Constantly praising God and being in favor and goodwill with all the people; and the Lord kept adding [to their number] daily those who were being saved [from spiritual death]. Acts 2:41-47 Amplified Bible (AMP)

What is God's demonstrated blessing to the assembly as a result of their obedience to the gifts occupying that office?

And [Paul] went down to Derbe and also to Lystra. A disciple named Timothy was there, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer [she had become convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and the Author of eternal salvation, and yielded obedience to Him]; but [Timothy's] father was a Greek. He [Timothy] had a good reputation among the brethren at Lystra and Iconium. Paul desired Timothy to go with him [as a missionary]; and he took

him and circumcised him because of the Jews that were in those places, all of whom knew that his father was a Greek. As they went on their way from town to town, **they delivered over [to the assemblies] for their observance the regulations decided upon by the apostles and elders who were at Jerusalem. So the Churches were strengthened and made firm in the faith, and they increased in number day after day.** Acts 16:1-5 Amplified Bible (AMP)

The manual teaching on and explaining in full detail the Ascension Gifts has been distributed to the Church congregation entitled **Truth Rising**. A larger more expansive document entitled **Doma**, and an historical manual entitled **Diakonos Evolution** are scheduled to be distributed later in 2014.

What did the Holy Spirit tell us about the focus of these gifts in order to accomplish the mission that has been set for them? What is their primary duty and what were the Apostles alluding to in Acts chapter 6 about not "*leaving the Word of God to wait tables?*"

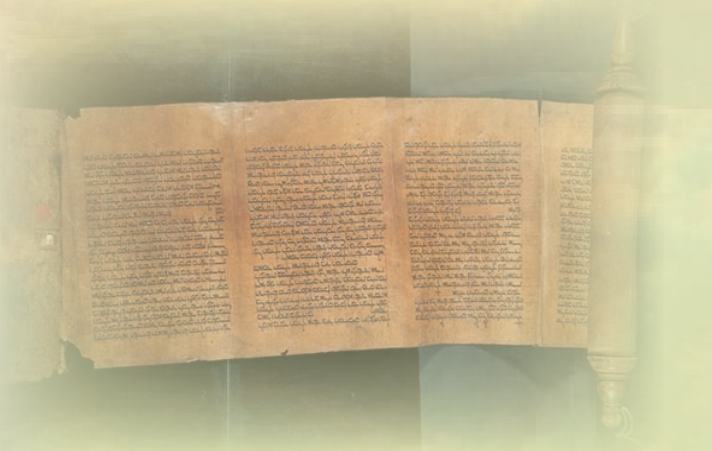
We find our answer to this question in Paul's instructions to Timothy when he was compelled by the Holy Spirit to write:

With a view to this we toil and strive, [yes and] suffer reproach, because we have [fixed our] hope on the living God, Who is the Savior (Preserver, Maintainer, Deliverer) of all men, especially of those who believe (trust in, rely on, and adhere to Him). Continue to command these things and to teach them. Let no one despise or think less of you because of your youth, **but be an example (pattern) for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity. Till I come, devote yourself to [public and private] reading, to exhortation (preaching and personal appeals), and to teaching and instilling doctrine.** Do not neglect the gift which is in you, [that special inward endowment] which was directly imparted to you [by the Holy Spirit] by prophetic utterance when the elders laid their hands upon you [at your ordination]. **Practice and cultivate and meditate upon these duties; throw yourself wholly into them** [as your ministry], **so that**

your progress may be evident to everybody. Look well to yourself [to your own personality] and to [your] teaching; persevere in these things [hold to them], for by so doing you will save both yourself and those who hear you. 1 Timothy 4:10-16 Amplified Bible (AMP)

This is the focus of the Executive leadership of the Church. But the question is raised, then, as to *how other positions like the Diaconate and even non-Biblical positions in the Church began to occupy Executive seats of authority?* The answer is simple: They developed by “a” tradition, but not by “Biblical” instruction. Let’s do a little historical study, shall we, and share with you what we’ve learned?

THE INFLUENCE OF THE DIDACHE



One of the oldest teachings of this is found in a document known as the *Didache* [From Jewish to Gentile. How the Jesus Movement Became Christianity, Geza Vermes, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, November/December 2012, volume 38 number 6, pages 53-78].

The *Didache* is one of the oldest Christian (Catholic) writings we have. It speaks to the divergence between the two branches of the Jesus followers: *Jews* and *Gentiles*. The *Didache* (pronounced “di-de-kay” or “di-de-ki”) actually shows the separate development of Jewish and Gentile Christianity that began with the Jerusalem council of the Apostles in the book of the Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles we simply call the “Acts of the Apostles.”

Although the Jewish and Gentile Christians agreed on some essentials such as expecting the impending

second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the subsequent inauguration of the Kingdom of God, in other respects, they saw things differently. The Jewish Christians saw baptism as a rite of purification and the breaking of bread that took place from house to house was an actual solemn communal meal.

These were transformed by Paul’s instructions to the Gentile Church to the point where Baptism developed into a mystical participation in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and the communal meal became a sacramental reiteration of the Last Supper between Christ and His Apostles. The perceived differences soon led to animosity between the two groups and to an ever increasing anti-Jewish feeling within the Gentile Church.

The *Didache* is also known as the *Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles* and was thought to be composed in either Constantinople, Palestine or Syria. It is generally assigned to the second half of the first century C.E. and is essentially a summary of the Mosaic Law, the love of God and of the neighbor. It is written as the earliest expression of the Jewish interpretation of Christianity as opposed to the Epistle of Barnabas which is generally recognized as the earliest expression of Gentile Christianity and is filled with anti-Jewish strictures.

It is from the *Didache* that we get the negative Jewish form of what we now know as the “Golden Rule.” The *Didache* recommends a lifestyle of primitive Jerusalem community including religious communism. The *Didache* also recommends that the newly converted Christian observe the entire Mosaic Law or as much of it as possible.

It is from the *Didache* that baptism is presented as an ablution or purification rite; and it is in this document that we have the instructions that you may “spray water” or “sprinkle water” on the candidate if no pools or rivers are available. The *Didache* recommends that the new convert recite the prayer known as “Our Father” three times a day and that dictated that the thanksgiving

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meal (Eucharist or the breaking of bread involved in what we now call communion) actually be celebrated only on the "Lord's Day" (which is Sunday); which is different from the daily recognition of the Eucharist as practiced in the Church of Acts.

The most significant aspect of the **Didache's** teachings, which signified its Jewish origins and contents as well as its perspective on Christianity, is the fact that in the **Didache**, there is no mention of Jesus Christ as the redeemer of the world, or as the Divine Word of God made flesh. In the **Didache**, Jesus is never referred to as the "Son of God." Interestingly enough, this expression is only found once in the **Didache** to refer to the self-designation of the Antichrist as "the seducer of the world." (Didache 16.4).

The only title in the **Didache** assigned to Jesus is the Greek term **pais**, which is a term which means either "servant" or "child." Jesus is essentially the great teacher who is expected to reappear soon to gather and transfer the dispersed members of His Church to the Kingdom of God. Atonement and redemption are not mentioned at all in this text; and hence, this information was handed down by Jewish teachers to Jewish listeners.

The switch in the perception of Jesus from charismatic prophet to divine being took place with geographical and religious change when the Christian preaching of the gospel moved from the Galilean-Judean culture to the pagan surroundings of the Greco-Roman world. Yet it is also from this document that the mistaken perception of executive power residing in the Diaconate, non-biblical officers, and even with the congregation through the process of voting was established.

by the Holy Spirit to follow. The practice of electing Bishops and even Deacons is actually a method of selection that is based on the teachings of the **Didache**. The **Didache** established the congregational election of the Bishop or Elder and it also served as the template for the congregation to exercise executive power in both the selection process of its Bishop and the decision-making of its business.

This and similar communal teachings during the end of the first century and the early part of the second century provide the foundation from which the rule of the congregation based on the vote at "Church meetings" was born; not the Holy Bible; and it is through this teaching that the process of electing successors to the position of Bishop or Elder was established. In this way, the traditions of men became seen as being just as important and just as significant as Christian doctrine: as Jesus told the Pharisees.

Then from Jerusalem came scribes and Pharisees and said, Why do Your disciples transgress and violate the rules handed down by the elders of the past? For they do not practice [ceremonially] washing their hands before they eat. He replied to them, **And why also do you transgress and violate the commandment of God for the sake of the rules handed down to you by your forefathers (the elders)?** For God commanded, Honor your father and your mother, and, He who curses or reviles or speaks evil of or abuses

Though it is the practice of most Christian protestant Churches (especially Baptists in the African American tradition) to elect their succeeding Bishops or Elders, this practice is not a Biblical concept nor has it been modeled in the Word of God as an instruction



or treats improperly his father or mother, let him surely come to his end by death. But you say, If anyone tells his father or mother, What you would have gained from me [that is, the money and whatever I have that might be used for helping you] is already dedicated as a gift to God, then he is exempt and no longer under obligation to honor and help his father or his mother. **So for the sake of your tradition** (the rules handed down by your forefathers), **you have set aside the Word of God** [depriving it of force and authority and making it of no effect. You pretenders (hypocrites)! Admirably and truly did Isaiah prophesy of you when he said: **These people draw near Me with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but their hearts hold off and are far away from Me. Uselessly do they worship Me, for they teach as doctrines the commands of men.** Matthew 15:1-9 Amplified Bible (AMP)

Through this process, the Diakonate was also then given executive powers that God did not designate, recognize nor authorize. These powers were born of tradition; and no matter how long that tradition has been practiced: if it is incorrect, then its incorrect no matter how long we've been practicing it.

With the instructions given by the Holy Spirit to Paul, we find that the Church acquired a hierarchical structure governed by first Bishops, assisted by presbyters, second the Ascension Gifts and them, assisted by Deacons. The Word of God is God's perfect system for His Church and it makes for a completely harmonious and elegantly flowing funnel through which the Holy Spirit empowers His Church and adds to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. It's a perfect hand-to-hand relationship engaged in one goal, one purpose and one aim: the glory of the Kingdom of our Christ.

The Didache Helped Lead Us Where We Are Today

The interpretations of the **Didache** and other sources actually helped to formulate the system of Ecclesiastical government we see today not only in the African American Baptist Church, but in most Protestant denominational Churches throughout the United States. Based on this following of the instructions of the **Didache**, unbeknownst to us, it is one of the ways that Executive authority was misplaced

in the African American Baptist Church.

Couple that with the fact that in most of our Churches, we were not always educated in *Ecclesiastical polity*, you can understand why we only copied what we saw in existing Churches or were taught by those we felt knew "Christendom." They did their best with the knowledge that they had, but they just didn't have access to information that we have access to today.

Consequently in our zealous and dedicated attempts at imitation, we knew nothing of the substance, origins, symbolism, or purposes of most of the practices we adopted. We just continued to engage, generation after generation, in continuing to do *what we do* without having any knowledge, accurate historical insight or enlightened understanding as to **why** we do what we do. We need to go back to the "Fountain of true wisdom," "the source of Messianic knowledge," and the "fountain of divine truth."

Where do we find such wisdom, such accurate knowledge and such absolute truth? The Word of God tells us where to find it and the only place where it can be found:

My son, if you will receive my words and treasure up my commandments within you, Making your ear attentive to skillful and godly Wisdom and inclining and directing your heart and mind to understanding [applying all your powers to the quest for it]; Yes, if you cry out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, If you seek [Wisdom] as for silver and search for skillful and godly Wisdom as for hidden treasures, Then you will understand the reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of [our omniscient] God. **For the Lord gives skillful and godly Wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.** He hides away sound and godly Wisdom and stores it for the righteous (those who are upright and in right standing with Him); He is a shield to those

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who walk uprightly and in integrity, That He may guard the paths of justice; yes, He preserves the way of His saints. Then you will understand righteousness, justice, and fair dealing [in every area and relation]; **yes, you will understand every good path. For skillful and godly Wisdom shall enter into your heart**, and knowledge shall be pleasant to you. Proverbs 2:1-10 Amplified Bible (AMP)

Where, then, will we find true understanding to help guide us in that truth and to direct our steps in that truth? Again, the Word of God tells us.

Leave off, simple ones [forsake the foolish and simpleminded] and live! And walk in the way of insight and understanding. He who rebukes a scorner heaps upon himself abuse, and he who reproves a wicked man gets for himself bruises. Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you. **Give instruction to a wise man and he will be yet wiser; teach a righteous man (one upright and in right standing with God) and he will increase in learning. The reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord is the beginning (the chief and choice part) of Wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight and understanding.** Proverbs 9:6-10 Amplified Bible (AMP)

When we go to the Word of God, Who are we actually going to?

In the beginning [before all time] was the Word (Christ), **and the Word was with God**, and **the Word was God Himself**. He was present originally with God. All things were made and came into existence through Him; and without Him was

not even one thing made that has come into being. In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men. **And the Word (Christ) became flesh** (human, incarnate) **and tabernacled** (fixed His tent of flesh, lived awhile) among us; and we [actually] saw His glory

(His honor, His majesty), such glory as an only begotten son receives from his father, full of grace (favor, loving-kindness) and truth. John 1:1-4,14 Amplified Bible (AMP)

We are going to the actual Bishop and Head of the Church. When we go to the Word, we are also going to the Savior, the Founder, the Architect and the Builder of the Church. Didn't the Holy Spirit tell us this in the following verses?

[The Father] has delivered and drawn us to Himself out of the control and the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, In Whom we have our redemption through His blood, [which means] the forgiveness of our sins. [Now] **He is the exact likeness of the unseen God** [the visible representation of the invisible]; He is the Firstborn of all creation. **For it was in Him that all things were created**, in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones, dominions, rulers, or authorities; **all things were created and exist through Him** [by His service, intervention] **and in and for Him**. And He Himself existed before all things, and in Him all things consist (cohere, are held together). **He also is the Head of [His] body, the Church**; seeing He is the Beginning, the Firstborn from among the dead, so that He alone in everything and in every respect might occupy the chief place [stand first and be preeminent]. **For it has pleased [the Father] that all the divine fullness** (the sum total of the divine perfection, powers, and attributes) **should dwell in Him permanently**. Colossians 1:13-19 Amplified Bible (AMP)

Jesus is God's wisdom and God's truth. This is because He is the Word of God. What did He say about Himself regarding what is true?

Jesus said to him, **I am the Way and the Truth** and the Life; no one comes to the Father except by (through) Me. If you had known Me [had learned to recognize Me], you would also have known My Father. From now on, you know Him and have seen Him. John 14:6,7 Amplified Bible (AMP)

Jesus is “*truth*” incarnate [or the “truth” in human form]. When Jesus speaks, all He speaks is truth because **HE IS THE TRUTH** in human form. Therefore, He is the source of the knowledge and wisdom of God: which is truth. The Holy Spirit tells us this in the following section of Scripture.

For the story and message of the cross is sheer absurdity and folly to those who are perishing and on their way to perdition, but to us who are being saved it is the [manifestation of] the power of God. For it is written, I will baffle and render useless and destroy the learning of the learned and the philosophy of the philosophers and the cleverness of the clever and the discernment of the discerning; I will frustrate and nullify [them] and bring [them] to nothing. Where is the wise man (the philosopher)? Where is the scribe (the scholar)? Where is the investigator (the logician, the debater) of this present time and age? Has not God shown up the nonsense and the folly of this world’s wisdom? For when the world with all its earthly wisdom failed to perceive and recognize and know God by means of its own philosophy, **God in His wisdom** was pleased through the foolishness of preaching [salvation, procured by Christ and to be had through Him], to save those who believed (who clung to and trusted in and relied on Him). For while Jews [demandingly] ask for signs and miracles and Greeks pursue philosophy and wisdom, We preach Christ (the Messiah) crucified, [preaching which] to the Jews is a scandal and an offensive stumbling block [that springs a snare or trap], and to the Gentiles it is absurd and utterly unphilosophical

nonsense. But to those who are called, whether Jew or Greek (Gentile), **Christ [is] the Power of God and the Wisdom of God.**
1 Corinthians 1:18-24
Amplified Bible (AMP)

Got it? Well, let’s answer some other questions. What happens when we do not walk in the knowledge and wisdom of God, which means not walking in the dictates of our Christ? What happens if we truly continue to walk in our man-made traditions and not after the teachings of the Word of God? Will there be a consequence of our choosing to walk in “our own way?” Again, we’ll let the Word of God answer that for you. Through the prophet Hosea, God said the following that still applies today:

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; **because you** [the priestly nation] **have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you that you shall be no priest to Me**; seeing you have forgotten the law of your God, **I will also forget your children.** Hosea 4:6 Amplified Bible (AMP)

This is why we are moved and choose to go the mouth and Word of God to learn His truth and His knowledge so that all of the things we do are in keeping with His righteous will and are pleasing in His sight. Because we have been accepted by God’s grace into His family and Kingdom, we will take full advantage of this blessing and “hasten to His throne.”

*[Much of this information will also be shared in forthcoming publications entitled **Doma**, **Elders**, and “**Diakonos Evolution**” – coming to a Church mailbox near you!]*

THE GROWING LEGAL EXPECTATION FOR CHURCHES TO DEVELOP A POLICY STATEMENT ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND MISCONDUCT

Introduction

Churches must be proactive in addressing sexual misconduct (including sexual/gender harassment and sexual abuse). When sexual harassment or misconduct occurs in a congregation, the primary victim is not the only person harmed. Family members, friends, and colleagues are also harmed by harassment or abuse in local Church settings. The entire congregation can be wounded: members may enter into conflict with one another and with the wider Church; the congregation may become involved in a painful lawsuit; and people's faith may be shaken. Let's look at the United Methodist Church and what they've done.

Since 1992, General Conference has upheld its directive that every United Methodist local Church develop and maintain policies and procedures for the prevention of sexual harassment. In 1996, General Conference expanded the directive to the prevention of sexual harassment, misconduct and abuse. These General Conference resolutions also call for increased opportunities for education of local Church leaders and congregation members.

A clear and concise policy statement is a key part of a congregation's plan to address sexual harassment and misconduct. Policy documents are intended to be used for prevention of, and education and guidance on appropriate responses to allegations of, sexual harassment and misconduct in the local Church. The following information is designed to help local Churches address this important topic.

Why Develop A Policy?

There are five essential reasons why every local Church must develop a policy regarding sexual misconduct and keep it updated each year.

1. **SAFETY.** A local Church is a sanctuary. All persons should feel safe there. A policy statement is a strong pronouncement that the local Church values all persons and will not tolerate or condone sexual harassment and misconduct, in any form.
2. **PREVENTING HARM.** A clear policy statement is the best initial step toward preventing sexual harassment and misconduct and thus can help the local Church avoid these types of deeply painful and financially devastating problems.
3. **REDUCING LIABILITY.** In its recent jurisprudence, the Supreme Court of the United States has made it clear that policies are crucial in an organization's defense of a sexual harassment and/or misconduct suit. Governments and courts of other nations have made similar decisions.
4. **CHURCH LAW.** General Conference has directed all local Churches to develop a policy for the prevention of sexual misconduct.
5. **EDUCATION.** Policies serve as an educational tool. The process of developing, writing, and updating a policy provides a valuable opportunity for clergy, staff, and laity to learn about sexual harassment and misconduct as well as strategies for prevention and effective response. The dissemination of, and communication about, a policy can help educate people in the congregation about the seriousness of these issues.

OUR CONGREGATION'S RESPONSE TO DEMANDS FOR A STANDING AND ANNUALLY UPDATED **SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND MISCONDUCT POLICY AND PROTOCOL**

In September of 2013, I received information from Minister Elizabeth Cawthon that our Church Insurance carrier has informed us that they now require minimum requirements in order to continue to carry Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Coverage at the current limits of our policy. When Minister Cawthon submitted the information to them, they responded by telling us that the renewal survey they received indicated that there are a number of areas within our current sexual harassment and misconduct program or lack thereof that need to be updated for the Church to be compliant and retain the current coverage limits when our policy is renewed.

Areas of concern listed by the Insurance company were these. They require a formal written policy including procedures in which employees and volunteers are asked if they have ever been accused of, participated in, or have been convicted of Sexual Harassment or Misconduct. They require all employees and those volunteers involved with any activity involving a minor to sign a release form that we would keep on file that allows us to request a criminal background check. They also require that no minor is ever alone with any one adult on the Church premises or in any Church-sponsored activity unless in a counseling or one-on-one mentorship situation. They require that we conduct a nationwide criminal background check on all employees, including any staff members, whether paid or unpaid.

In short, we needed to put a comprehensive Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policy in place including procedures we must implement and develop; and we had been given until November 15, 2013 to do so. Once our procedures were developed, we would then need to verify the completion of this requirement by returning

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our updated Sexual Misconduct Renewal Survey reflecting the policy that is in place. If we failed to do this, we would face a vast reduction in coverage, occurrence and annual aggregate limit if renewed.

I was blessed to work with a group of people concentrating on specific items in the policy and in helping put this policy and protocol together. We had a short window of time, but we met our deadline with no problem. We will be presenting the new policy to our ministry leaders after we complete the final edition for this year.

The wonderful saints who worked so diligently with me in the formulation of this policy and protocol were: Deacon James Allen, Minister Lacy Anthony, Minister Kevin Brackens, Minister Gregory Carr, Minister Elizabeth Cawthon, Deaconess Ivy Davis, Deaconess Elizabeth Edmonds, Minister Bertha Franks, Minister Glenda Gill, Deacon Frank Grant, Jr., Deaconess Dana Grant, Deaconess Pam Hubbard-Lambkins, Minister Robert Irvin, Deaconess Deborah Jones, Minister Ethledra Jones-Hollis, Deaconess Valerie Lawrence, Minister Kimberly Ray Redus, Deaconess Edna Roach, Minister Tim Robnett, Minister Emerson Smith, Deacon Sheldon Smith, and Minister Willa Washington.

We thank God for their time, for their sacrifice and cooperation with the plan and with each other, for working so well together and efficiently, for doing such a fantastic job of demonstrating what Christians can do in a short span of time when they are all on one accord, and what the Holy Spirit can create in His Church through the vessels He has anointed and placed there.

It was truly a wonderful experience. We learned more about our own capabilities and talents. We learned more about the well of leadership God is developing for this season in our congregation, and we are excited about what the future holds for us regarding the potential that lies in this place. After the ministry leaders are informed of the Sexual Harassment Misconduct Policy and Protocols, we will then make them available to teach the congregation as a whole.

We thank God for having completed and installed a Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policy and Protocols. We have also assembled and in place: (1) A Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Compliance Team/Training Team, (2) A Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Crisis Management Team, (3) A Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Care Team, and (4) A Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Hearing Team. All of these make up the **Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policy and Protocol Teams**.

We already have a Sexual Harassment Policy in place that was developed by Deaconess Janet Davis in 2005. We thank God that we are moving toward complete compliance with the laws of the land and with the expectations of Churches and organizations with regard to the protection of its parishioners and the legal expectations therein.

A Statement From The House Of Living Stone Sexual Harassment And Misconduct Policy And Protocols Team

All members of The Ministry of Jesus Christ at First Baptist Church of Webster Groves, the House of Living Stone, community play a role in creating a culture of safety and respect and in eliminating Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Sexual Assault.

The majority of people do not commit Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, or Sexual Assault. However, many people witness varying degrees of sexually offensive conduct. The actions we take by intervening at any level send the clear message that disrespectful, demeaning, and violent behavior is not acceptable. Such an intervention may serve to educate and prevent someone from committing a sexual offense in the future, and may empower and validate the person experiencing the behavior. Making a choice to denounced violence of any kind is a choice that supports a peaceful, respectful and vibrant community of faith.

The Following Are Steps You Can Take To Help Make This A Safe Community Of Faith:

1. Call the Elder/Pastor, Church ministers, Church officers, the Sexual Misconduct Compliance Team or the Sexual Misconduct Crisis Management Team if you witness a violent or potentially violent and personally violating situation, or if you are aware of an assault taking place and you are concerned for the person's safety.
2. Intervene if you believe someone's boundaries are being violated or that they are in a potentially uncomfortable or unsafe situation; ask if they are comfortable with the situation and if they are in need of any assistance. Alternatively, you may alert other sources of assistance (e.g. the police or other members in the vicinity).
3. If you are not able to say something at the time of the incident and you are still concerned about the person's well-being, follow up with them later by asking how they felt about the incident and if the person would like assistance in getting support.
4. If you hear someone acting, speaking, or telling jokes in a manner that is offensive, demeaning, or abusive to a targeted person or group of people, ask them to stop. It is neither cute nor funny. If you are aware that an incident of Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, or Sexual Assault has taken place, encourage the person to report the incident and seek support.

THE HOUSE OF LIVING STONE WEB PAGE UPDATE

I know that you are waiting anxiously for the Web Page launching. I have already had inquiries as to when it is going to be launched.

At present, we are in the final phase of getting it ready for presentation. We had a scheduling glitch which actually pushed our launch date back. But we are moving forward now with a special feature for the historical component of the Web Page that Minister Monica Franklin is organizing and putting in place with the help of other selected members of the congregation. We hope to have the Web Page launched no later than May of 2014. Pray that everything goes well and that we will be able to follow through with these plans, if it's the Lord's will and we live.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Minister Don Jordan, and Minister Davida Wilkins for beginning this process, and Minister Monica Franklin for completing this project for us. She has simply done a marvelous job in bringing it near fruition.

BUDGETARY ADJUSTMENTS FOR 2014

First of all, let me thank you for your contributions to the Building Repair Project; the TABERNACLE PRESERVATION. We are now above \$30,000.00 and for that, we are grateful. Others have contributed moneys to particular projects (i.e. the flooring in the Vestibule and the stairs leading to James Hall) and we thank God for their selfless acts of giving.

God has and is blessing us richly in completing projects that



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need to be completed. While the giving is still necessary, we want to thank you for what you have already contributed. We also want to thank those who have come together to sponsor a particular project or repair to help the congregation. Your selflessness and your giving spirit are very much appreciated, and has helped us tremendously.

A second reason for us coming to you is to share another item of information. Upon meeting with the Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer, we found that our net income for the year of 2013 was at a negative balance. Our net income showed that our tithes and our offerings have significantly dropped over the past year. As a result, we do not have the funds available to allow for all of our ministries to have budgets for the year of 2014.

We only have funding available to fund the following five ministries: (a) Sunday School [spiritual education God demands us to pursue in His Holy Word], (b) The Food Outreach Ministry [fulfilling Matthew 25], (c) the Church Ordinances under the direction of the Deaconess Ministry [Communion and Baptism expenses], (d) Home and World missions [which is the ministry through which we as a congregation obey the Lord in paying our corporate tithes to other Christian organizations, Churches and to other Christian efforts toward edifying the people of God], and finally, (e) Office Supplies and Expenses.

We will use this year to hopefully rebuild our financial reserves for our operating expenses so that if funding allows, we will be able to provide budgets in 2015 for the ministries that will not receive budgets this year.

We hope that you will be able to help us build back up our financial capabilities through your giving of Tithes and Offerings. We are doing our best to continue the work that God has commanded us to do, however our only income is received through these offerings. Every year, because our income has decreased so dramatically, we have had to cut back more and more of our programming.

We just wanted you to know where we are financially in regards to the extension of budgets annually. Thank you for your time and your attention, beloved. May God bless you richly and abundantly with all spiritual blessings in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Pastor Bonner, Congregational Elder
Minister Elizabeth Cawthon, Church Treasurer
Deaconess Dana Grant, Assistant Church Treasurer



House Of Living Stone Campus

SECURITY INITIATIVE

We are in the process of developing a comprehensive protocol for the security of our parishioners, our facilities and all of our assets. This protocol will involve the following ministries working in concert under the umbrella of the Church's new **Security Council**: The Usher/Health Unit Ministry, The Men On Patrol (MOP), The Eyes Only Ministry and the Levites Ministry. If it is the Lord's will and we live, we are working to have our protocols completed and in place by May of 2014.

The Security Council will be those individuals assigned to oversee the security concerns of this congregation. The Council will be led by the Elder of the Congregation, Dr. Wendell Bonner. They will meet annually or bi-annually to discuss the security status of the assets of the congregation and any enhancements that need to take place. This is the overarching council for the Church's security concerns. Other relevant councils to be formed will be the Executive Council and the Action Council working under the aegis of the Security Council.

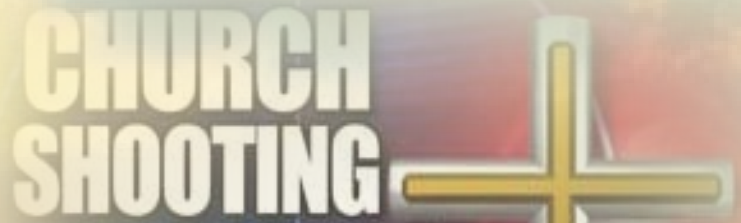
The Categories to be addressed comprehensively will be:

- 1. Suspicious Behavior** [i.e. behavior that is noticeably suspicious in nature as if alternative agendas to worship are at work]
- 2. Disturbing Behavior, Disruptive and Distracting Behavior** [i.e. mental illness, drug induced behavioral or verbal changes; behavior distracting people from concentrating on worship during times of worship]
- 3. Threatening Behavior** anywhere on the Church grounds or at Church-sponsored events.
- 4. Security Breeches** [i.e. individuals who are in areas of the Church that are off-limits to non-official members]
- 5. Cyber Security Breeches** [or computer stealth or system invasion of confidential information]

You may be asking, "Why do we need a security protocol for this congregation?" The following statistics should tell us why it is needed. Times are changing and we need to adapt to the changing times. However, this is really nothing new. The Levites were assigned to protect the Tabernacle [i.e. God's Place of Meeting]. We are only continuing what God actually instituted long ago.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE WORLD AROUND US

After reading the previous article, now you may be able to put the following information into perspective and understand why a Security Protocol is necessary. The following incidents describe the state of the world that we live in today and why we must be responsive to it.



18 Church Shootings In 11 Years

February 14, 2010 - [Richmond, California](#) - Three hooded men walk into Gethsemane Church of God in Christ and opened fire and then fled the scene, as the singing of the choir was replaced by frightened screams. The two victims, a 14-year-old boy and a 19-year-old man, were hospitalized.

March 8, 2009 - [Maryville, Illinois](#) - Suspect Terry Joe Sedlacek, 27, of Troy, walks into the First Baptist Church, and shoots pastor Fred Winters dead, point blank. Several Church members are injured by a knife in the struggle to capture after the attack, The suspect also had stabbed himself, but survived, when his gun jams.

July 27, 2008 - [Knoxville, Tennessee](#) - A gunman opens fire in a Church during a youth performance, killing two people and injuring seven.

Dec. 9, 2007 - [Colorado](#) - Three people are killed and five wounded in two shooting rampages, one at a missionary school in suburban Denver and one at a Church in Colorado Springs. The gunman in the second incident is killed by a guard.

May 20, 2007 - [Moscow, Idaho](#) - A standoff between police and a suspect in the shootings of three people in a Presbyterian Church ended with three dead, including one police officer.

Aug. 12, 2007 - [Neosho, Missouri](#) - First Congregational Church - 3 killed - Eiken Elam Saimon shot and killed the pastor and two deacons and wounded five others.

May 21, 2006 - [Baton Rouge, Louisiana](#) - The Ministry of Jesus Christ Church - 4 killed - The four at the Church who were shot were members of Erica Bell's family; she was abducted and murdered elsewhere; Bell's mother, Church pastor Claudia Brown, was seriously wounded - Anthony Bell, 25, was the shooter.

Feb. 26, 2006 - [Detroit, Michigan](#) - Zion Hope Missionary Baptist Church - 2 killed + shooter - Kevin L. Collins, who reportedly went to the Church looking for his girlfriend, later killed himself.

April 9, 2005 - [College Park, Georgia](#) - A 27-year-old airman died after being shot at a Church, where he had once worked as a security guard.

March 12, 2005 - [Brookfield, Wisconsin](#) - Living Church of God - 7 killed + shooter - Terry Ratzmann opened fire on the congregation, killing seven and wounding four before taking his own life.

July 30, 2005 - [College Park, Georgia](#) - World Changers Church International - shooter killed - Air Force Staff Sgt. John Givens was shot five times by a police officer after charging the officer, following violent behavior.

Dec. 17, 2004, [Garden Grove, Calif.](#): A veteran musician at the Crystal Cathedral shoots himself to death after a nine-hour standoff.

Oct. 5, 2003 - [Atlanta, Georgia](#) - Turner Monumental AME Church - 2 killed + shooter - Shelia Wilson walked into the Church while preparations are being made for service and shot the pastor, her mother and then herself.

June 10, 2002 - [Conception, Missouri](#) - Benedictine monastery - 2 killed + shooter - Lloyd Robert Jeffress shot four monks in the monastery killing two and wounding two, before killing himself.

March 12, 2002 - [Lynbrook, New York](#) - Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church - 2 killed - Peter Troy, a former mental patient, opens fire during Mass, killing the priest and a parishioner. He later receives a life sentence.

May 18, 2001 - [Hopkinsville, Kentucky](#) - Greater Oak Missionary Baptist Church - 2 killed - Frederick Radford stood up in the middle of a revival service and began shooting at his estranged wife, Nicole Radford, killing her and a woman trying to help her.

Sept. 15, 1999 - [Fort Worth, Texas](#) - Wedgewood Baptist Church - 7 killed + shooter - Larry Gene Ashbrook shot dead seven people and injured a further seven at a concert by Christian rock group Forty Days in Fort Worth, Texas before killing himself.

April 15, 1999 - [Salt Lake City, Utah](#) - LDS Church Family History Library - 2 killed + shooter - Sergei Babarin, 70, with a history of mental illness, entered the library, killed two people and wounded four others before he was gunned down by police.



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CHURCHES BOOST SECURITY AS VIOLENT INCIDENTS GROW

- J.D. Gallop, Florida Today 12:04 a.m. EDT July 7, 2013

THE NUMBER OF DEADLY EPISODES AT SANCTUARIES HAS SOARED OVER THE LAST DECADE, AND MASS SHOOTINGS AT SCHOOLS, MALLS AND MOVIE THEATERS HAVE LEFT AMERICANS FEELING LIKE IT COULD HAPPEN ANYWHERE.

VIERA, Fla. -- It is Sunday and 36-year-old Julie Robinson is keeping an eye on her children as they play and sing near the front of the sanctuary stage at Freedom Christian Center. The mother of four is not the only one watching. Quietly standing in the back of the hall is Jeffery Gilchrist. As dozens of congregants lift their hands in prayer, preparing for the week's message from the pulpit, Gilchrist's eyes are alert, darting across the spacious worship hall. A white, coiled microphone wire ripples from his ear to help him communicate with ushers and plainclothes security personnel.

Their Mission: Protecting The Flock By Being Ready For The Worst

"This is the norm in our world's culture and there's a need for security wherever we go nowadays," said Gilchrist, who oversees security efforts at Freedom Christian and also is the CEO of Opaque Security, an international company that trains Churches and synagogues to protect congregations. *"We need to be prepared."*

It is an increasingly common sentiment in Churches, synagogues and mosques nationwide as the number of deadly episodes at sanctuaries has soared over the last decade, and mass shootings at elementary schools, malls and movie theaters have left Americans feeling like it could happen anywhere.

Just last month, the federal government stepped in with a first-ever report outlining security recommendations for houses of worship. The 38-page plan, released just days after a man was shot and wounded during a Catholic Mass in Salt Lake City, advises congregations to plan for potential emergencies, including what police call random "active shooter" situations. Among the advice offered by the federal government: run, hide or, as a last resort, fight.

"I think we're seeing all of this for multiple reasons. Whenever there is a violent situation, we see security beefed up. Schools, for example, have become more hardened targets. And as we see other places get more readiness, that means other places like Churches and ministries



become softer targets,” said Colorado Church security consultant Carl Chinn, who holds training seminars for Churches across the country.

In 1999, there were 22 violent deaths — including homicides and suicides — reported at worship centers nationwide, according to statistics compiled by Chinn. Last year, there were 115 attacks, with 75 of those ending in a fatality, he said.

Ministers say increased training is important as sanctuaries have expanded their roles over the years, going from small Church houses where worshipers sought solace from the outside world to larger facilities offering schools, exercise classes or even game rooms.

“It’s absolutely horrible but it’s a reality. Why are these things happening? That’s the age old question, a spiritual question,” said Craig Nau, an associate pastor at Freedom Christian Center. *“Jesus said that there would be troubles but he also said for us not to let our hearts get troubled. Having security protocols allows us to think things through, to be alert and all of that comes out of a place of prayer.”*

‘Being Aware’

In many Churches, ushers still are the front line of security, with many spotting distraught worshipers or stepping in during minor disputes. Other congregations have no systematic way of knowing or watching who walks through the doors.

At Calvary Chapel, a dedicated team of about 30 to 40 plainclothes volunteers are tasked with protecting the 10,000 people who crowd into the Church’s primary campuses in West Melbourne, Viera and Sebastian each weekend for services. Last month, the team met with Chinn for a training session.

“You never know who may come to your facility but if you’re visiting us, you learn early on that there are a few people who are paying attention and watching the crowds. And we do have armed people in the services,” said John Lucas, the chief security officer for the Church.

Jeffery Gilchrist, CEO of Opaque Security, has been working security at Freedom Christian Center in Viera, Fla., for the last two years. (Photo: Craig Rubadoux, Florida Today)

Lucas said that several of his security personnel, equipped with two-way ear pieces, are licensed to carry guns and do. *“We haven’t seen many problems,”* he said.

Some Church leaders are reluctant to discuss security measures but point to a long tradition of pastors preaching faith but also carrying guns.

Florida law allows people to carry weapons in houses of worship. That means worshipers like Wendy Butcher, a National Rifle Association-certified weapons trainer, freely carries her handgun with her when she goes to services at New Life Christian Fellowship and other congregations in Titusville.

“It’s like putting on make-up or panty hose. I know a lot of people who carry (their guns) to Church,” said Butcher, adding that people should always be aware of their surroundings.

“You can’t live your life being in fear. This way, I know that I can protect myself. Each case is situational but if there is someone in a Church shooting and I’m standing nearby, you can bet I’d take them out in a heartbeat.”

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Changing Culture

Security experts also point to a growing hostility toward differing beliefs as one of the reasons for the trend of violence aimed at houses of worship.

"It wasn't too many years ago that even gangs respected Church grounds," Chinn said. "Now we're seeing more incidents," from violent disputes between congregants that break out during services to break-ins, assaults and other crimes.

In Brevard County, there have been sporadic — but isolated — outbursts of violence. The incidents include a January 2012 after-school brawl between a juveniles playing football on Calvary Chapel grounds. In 2002, a 59-year-old Catholic priest at Our Saviour Catholic Church in Cocoa Beach was beaten at the Church. In 2006, a gunman fired on the Islamic Society of Brevard mosque. No one was injured and no arrests were made.

For Robinson, coming to Church is a time to reconnect spiritually with God and to provide her family with a foundation of faith. Unlike Butcher, she doesn't carry a gun but is glad the Church has a security team.

It *"makes me feel very safe as a mom of four children,"* she said. *"They're looking out for things that I may not see when we're just coming for Church."* a time, even one colony at a time.



A PASTORAL CALL FOR ASSISTANCE WITH KINGDOM WORK

In the year that King Uzziah died, [in a vision] I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and the skirts of His train filled the [most holy part of the] temple. Above Him stood the seraphim; each had six wings: with two [each] covered his [own] face, and with two [each] covered his feet, and with two [each] flew. And one cried to another and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory! And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! For I am undone and ruined, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts! Then flew one of the seraphim [heavenly beings] to me, having a live coal in his hand which he had taken with tongs from off the altar; And with it he touched my mouth and said, Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity and guilt are taken away, and your sin is completely atoned for and forgiven. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, WHOM SHALL I SEND? AND WHO WILL GO FOR US? THEN SAID I, HERE AM I; SEND ME. Isaiah 6:1-8 Amplified Bible (AMP)

Children's Church Teachers And Assistants

Beloved of the Lord, if you or you know of a saint in this House who feels a calling on them to teach, nurture and help spiritual develop and love the children of this congregation in a structured learning environment to help them know the Word of God, in the program known as Children's Church, please contact Elder Bonner



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at **314-961-3246 ext. 6**. We are looking for saints who will willingly serve as teachers, aids and support staff members. The requirements for these positions are as follows.

All interested persons:

1. Must have completed the Genesis Orientation Program.
2. Must have completed 3 years of membership in the congregation.
3. Must be involved in some ongoing phase of education here at the Church or at some accredited institution [Bible Academy, Bible Institute, Sunday School, etc].
4. Must have a selfless dedication to the education of our Children that means missing the Mid-morning Sunday worship service [though CD's can be provided to all who serve].
5. Must be willing to follow the protocols of the program and its direction.
6. Must attend a mandatory Teacher's Preparation Course prepared for this program taught by Elder Bonner to make sure that you are equipped and prepared for the task.
7. After completing this course, are asked to become a part of the ongoing Teacher's Workshop that meets on the 4th Wednesday of our public study months at 7:00 p.m.

Elder Bonner will be the new Director of the Children's Church program. He will be assisted closely by Ministers Kimberly Redus and Patricia Johnson who will be serving in the areas of Didactic preparation, program development and faculty development. If you feel that God is calling you to help us in this most important work that carries a blessing with it, then feel free to contact Elder Bonner at **314-961-3246, ext. 6** and let him know of your interest. You will be instructed, trained in the curriculum, and slowly incorporated into the program so that you will not need to feel any anxiety at all.

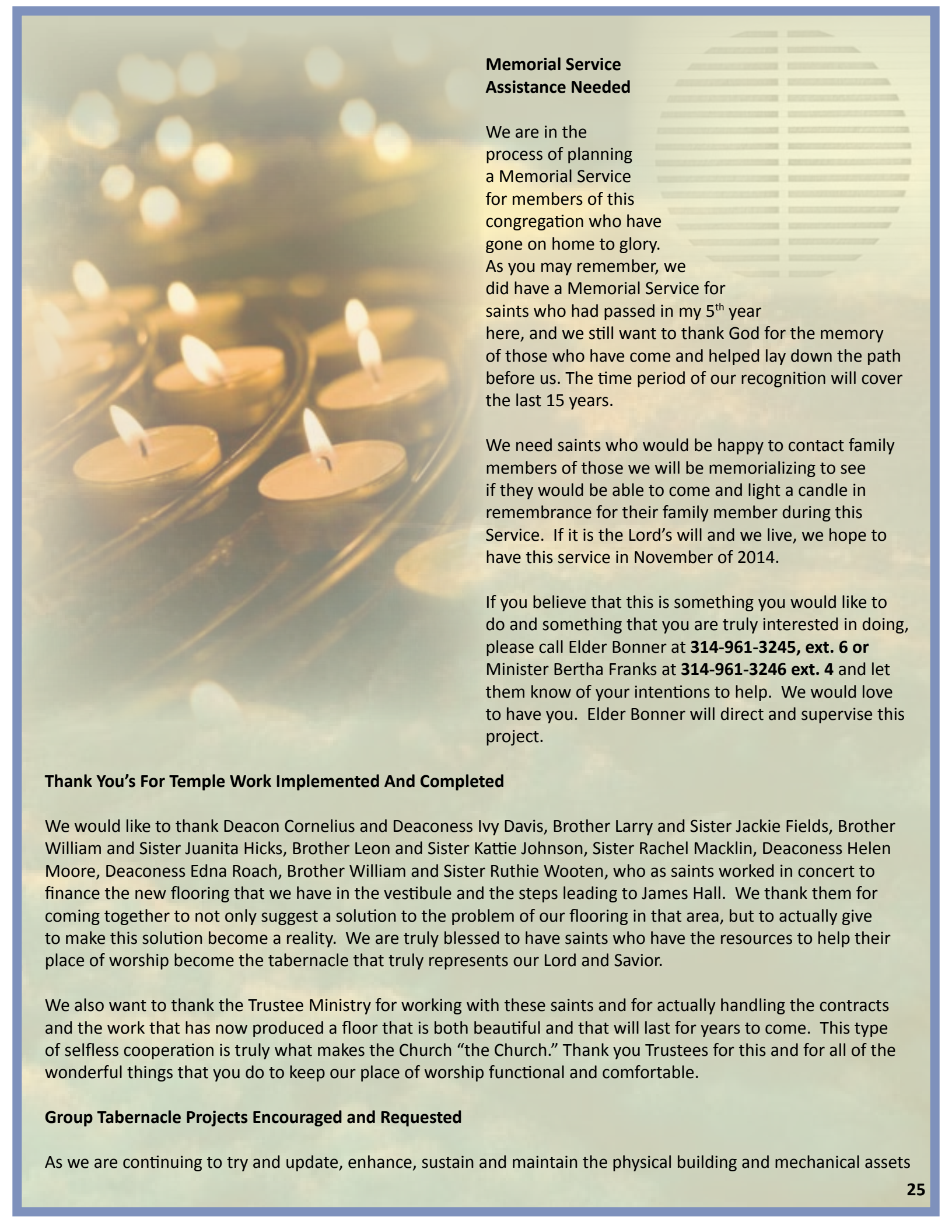
You will truly enjoy working with the very capable and committed staff teachers and coordinators that we have in place now. We are just looking to expand the program and to bring it to greater heights in preparing them to be "lights shining in a world of darkness." The children are hungry and they want to learn. We pray now that God will send workers into the vineyard who have a heart to help teach, love, nurture and develop them.

If you are interested, the deadline for receiving names for this program is March 31, 2014.

Sunday Morning [Liturgical] Intercessory Prayer Leaders

We want to thank Deaconess Colleen Johnson for her years of faithful service as the Director of the Liturgical Intercessory Prayer Service that we conduct before the beginning of our Sunday morning worship experiences. Deaconess Johnson had to step down from her position because of health reasons in December of 2013.

Before stepping down, Deaconess Johnson and Elder Bonner were looking for others to offer the opportunity of participating in our worship experience in this way. Nothing is more important than praying for and with the saints, and this act is a commandment from God. If you are moved to step forward and to tell the Lord, "Here am I, send me," then please contact Elder Bonner at **314-961-3245, ext. 6** and let him know of your interest. You will be instructed on exactly what to do and aided in every way to ease into the position.



Memorial Service Assistance Needed

We are in the process of planning a Memorial Service for members of this congregation who have gone on home to glory. As you may remember, we did have a Memorial Service for saints who had passed in my 5th year here, and we still want to thank God for the memory of those who have come and helped lay down the path before us. The time period of our recognition will cover the last 15 years.

We need saints who would be happy to contact family members of those we will be memorializing to see if they would be able to come and light a candle in remembrance for their family member during this Service. If it is the Lord's will and we live, we hope to have this service in November of 2014.

If you believe that this is something you would like to do and something that you are truly interested in doing, please call Elder Bonner at **314-961-3245, ext. 6** or Minister Bertha Franks at **314-961-3246 ext. 4** and let them know of your intentions to help. We would love to have you. Elder Bonner will direct and supervise this project.

Thank You's For Temple Work Implemented And Completed

We would like to thank Deacon Cornelius and Deaconess Ivy Davis, Brother Larry and Sister Jackie Fields, Brother William and Sister Juanita Hicks, Brother Leon and Sister Kattie Johnson, Sister Rachel Macklin, Deaconess Helen Moore, Deaconess Edna Roach, Brother William and Sister Ruthie Wooten, who as saints worked in concert to finance the new flooring that we have in the vestibule and the steps leading to James Hall. We thank them for coming together to not only suggest a solution to the problem of our flooring in that area, but to actually give to make this solution become a reality. We are truly blessed to have saints who have the resources to help their place of worship become the tabernacle that truly represents our Lord and Savior.

We also want to thank the Trustee Ministry for working with these saints and for actually handling the contracts and the work that has now produced a floor that is both beautiful and that will last for years to come. This type of selfless cooperation is truly what makes the Church "the Church." Thank you Trustees for this and for all of the wonderful things that you do to keep our place of worship functional and comfortable.

Group Tabernacle Projects Encouraged and Requested

As we are continuing to try and update, enhance, sustain and maintain the physical building and mechanical assets

THE ELDER'S INTERCOM

that God has given us here in this House, we want to encourage you by another way in which you can help us. If you and two or three other saints (or more) would like to pool your resources together and sponsor the replacement or maintenance of one of the projects that has been listed on our "Tabernacle Preservation" announcements, please feel free to contact Minister Willa Washington, the Trustee Ministry Chair, and she will be more than happy to guide you through the process of how you can help in this area.

This method is an excellent way to help accomplish goals and to help address many of our issues if you cannot and do not have the money on your own to help as you would like. It's another great sign of cooperation and dedication to the preservation of the place God has allowed us to call His "House of Worship."

So if you see on the list of projects something that you truly want to assist in helping with, please contact Minister Washington. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Musicians, Music Artisans And Singers

We are looking for new members to join our **Chancel Choir** that ministers in music for the 10:45 a.m. Sunday Morning Worship experience on 1st and 3rd Sundays. Please contact Minister Charlotte McFarlane, our Minister of Music, if you are interested in joining the **Chancel Choir** by calling the Church [at 314-961-3246] and leaving your contact information.

If you are interested in joining **The Children of Trinity Chorale** that ministers in music also during the 10:45 a.m. Sunday Morning Worship experience on the 4th Sunday, call the Church and ask to be contacted by either Minister Charlotte McFarlane or Minister Charlotte Batey-Clay, the Chorale's Director. If you attend the Early morning service, feel free to call the Church and ask to be contacted by Deaconess Valerie Lawrence if you are interested in joining **The Early Morning Choir** that ministers in music for the 7:30 a.m. Sunday Morning Worship Experience.

Don't just enjoy the worship experience, become a contributing part of the worship experience. So turn that pew "loose" and give us a call.

My Deepest Apologies For Another Ministry "Push-Back"

I would like to extend my deepest apologies to the wonderful people and saints of this congregation. I had intended to begin the Ministry to Terminally Ill Children this Spring, but due to other matters that surfaced and required my attention as Church Elder, I will have to push the beginning date of this ministry back even further. For those who were anxiously awaiting the beginning of this ministry, I am sorry; but please take heart. We are not canceling its inception, just postponing it for a bit. As soon as the Lord makes time for us to embark upon this ministry in earnest and with our full attention, we will make preparations to step into it. At this time, we are busy attempting to solidify and stabilize our organizational infrastructure. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Men for M.O.P. Needed

We are at a point where we would like to add men to the Men On Patrol ministry. Minister Timothy Robnett is the Coordinator of the ministry. We need men to help serve for our 7:30 a.m. service and we can always use more men to help us patrol the premises to ensure the safety of our children upstairs, our youth in the Ravine Building and our Teens in the Clark building during the 10:45 a.m. worship hour. We can also use men to help us during our Sabbath Service worship experience on Saturdays at 12:00 noon.

We would greatly appreciate any man [who has completed the Genesis Orientation program](#) to help us and become a part of this ministry as we, as men, stand up and take our place to provide assistance to our fellow saints, and to help to monitor and protect our property, our people and the Lord's congregation. If you are moved to help us, then please contact the Church at 961-3246 and give your information to the Administrative Assistant or the Media Coordinator and someone will respond to you. If you would like to as well, you can contact anyone that you see working in the ministry or the Ministry's coordinator, Minister Timothy Robnett during or after any of our worship experiences. Thank you so much for responding to our call, and we look forward to seeing more of our men standing as sentinels of salvation for the people of God who love Christ and worship Him in this House.

New Members For Periballo Welcome

If you are interested in working with the Periballo clothing ministry, a ministry that collects and provides clothing to those less fortunate than we are, you are welcome to join this ministry. This ministry was given to Minister Bobbie Wilson by the Holy Spirit and is designed to fulfill the injunction of our Savior when He said "I was naked and you clothed me." The ministry is housed in the Ravine Building in the lower level and has served many families over the years. It has also served to contribute clothes to other ministries that hold the same mission in the name of our Christ.

Minister Bobbie Wilson is the Coordinator for this ministry. If you would like more information on the ministry, its schedule and what part you may be able to play in it, please call the Church at 314-961-3246, ext. 139 and leave your information so that Minister Wilson can contact you. Thank you.





THE ELDER'S INTERCOM NEWSLETTER

**An In-House Informational and Educational Newsletter
From the Church Elder To The Members of this House of Living Stone**

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