

CONSTITUTION
OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GHANA

THIS DOCUMENT, THE CONSTITUTION OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GHANA
IS HEREBY AUTHENTICATED BY THE APPENDING
OF OUR SIGNATURES IN THE PRESENCE
OF SYNOD AT ABETIFI, KWAHU PRESBYTERY

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DONE THIS 31ST DAY OF AUGUST,
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD, 2000.

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CONSTITUTION

OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHINA

THE DOCUMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHINA
OF 2000 ADAPTED BY THE PRESBYTERY
OF OUR SICKLAWAYA THERESA
OF THE PRC CHURCHES

APPROVED

BY THE PRESBYTERY

OF THE PRC CHURCHES

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The Presbyterian Church of Ghana as a people of GOD, is governed by a body of rules and principles which are based on the Scriptures and which emphasize the supremacy and authority of Scripture and the centrality of GOD. These rules and principles are embodied in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana.

The Society in which the Church fulfils her mission and prophetic guardianship is located in a cultural milieu which is not static. Being dynamic, the society responds to and adopts socio-political, religio-cultural and economic changes which are dictated, inter alia, by international interdependence, science and technology, cultural pluralism and cultural influence. By virtue of her mission, the Church responds positively to these changes to maintain her impact on society without negating the beliefs, principles and doctrines upon which the Christian faith is based.

Being cognizant of this important phenomenon in her life

and work, the Church has been subjecting her Constitution to various revisions since 1902; and between that year and the year 2000, the Constitution of the Church has undergone seven revisions, the present volume being the seventh.

At its meeting in November 1993 at the Presbyterian Women's Centre in Abokobi, the Synod Committee appointed a Committee to review the Church's Constitution known as the Regulations, Practice and Procedure (R.P.P) under the Chairmanship of the Rev. A. A. Beeko (now Very Rev. A. A. Beeko). The Committee submitted a Draft Constitution to the Synod Committee which was remitted to the Presbyteries for study. It was discussed by the Presbyteries and various views were expressed.

The Sixty-sixth Synod¹ held in Takoradi from 19 to 24 August, 1995 enlarged the membership of the Constitution Review Committee and charged it with the continuation of the review of the Constitution and the drawing up of the modus operandi of the General Assembly system to be adopted by the Church. The membership of the enlarged Committee, which was given the power to co-opt, was as follows:

The Rev. Dr. Kofi Effa Ababio	-	Chairman
The Rev. Dr. Benjamin Abotchie Ntreh	-	Secretary
The Rev. Dr. Sam Prempeh	-	Member
Mrs. Grace Nartey	-	Member
The Rev. Emmanuel Sakite Mate-Kodjo	-	Member
Mr. Benjamin Samuel Kofi Kwakye	-	Member
Mrs. Justice Doris Owusu-Addo	-	Member
Mrs. Asie Allotey	-	Member/Drafter
The Rev. Peter Maugbi Kodjo	-	Co-opted Member
The Rev. Dr. Kwame Bediako	-	Co-opted Member

The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church defines the General Assembly as "The highest court of a Church in Presbyterianism. It consists of ministers and elders elected to represent the whole Church, over which it exercises supreme jurisdiction"²².

The first Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana was held in Akropong Akuapem on 14 August, 1918; and from that year to 1998, a period of eighty years, Synod had been the highest Court of the Church.

Thus, when Synod decided to move up from Synod to General Assembly, the 66th Synod held in Takoradi in August 1995 mandated the Regulations, Practice and Procedure Review Committee to draw up modalities as regards the General Assembly

1 Minutes of the 66th Synod, Takoradi, August 1995, p. 28, item 40

2. F.L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone Eds. Oxford University Press, New York, 1974 p. 554

system to enable the Church to abolish Synod and adopt General Assembly as the Supreme Court of the Church.

The Presbyterian Church of Ghana underwent an evaluation exercise between October 1996 and August 1997. The Evaluation team made a number of Recommendations the implementation of which necessitated changes in the organizational structure of the Church. The review of the Constitution reflects these changes.

Although the Constitution has undergone a comprehensive review, it has not been altered in essence; and any move to alter any part of the Constitution was directed by a spirit of Presbyterianism and the Reformed Polity, hence the retention of typical Presbyterian idiosyncrasies.

One of the major changes which have been effected is the separation of the Regulations from the Practice and Procedure, the former forming The Constitution of the Church and the latter embodied in a book entitled The Manual of Order of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, (hereinafter referred to as "the Manual"). This is necessary in view of the fact that it takes a long time for the Constitution to be reviewed while parts of the Manual can be amended, as and when necessary. Another change is the format of the Constitution which has been made to conform to the general style and standard of writing constitutions. Furthermore, this change will conduce to easy reference.

The members of the Constitution Review Committee give grateful thanks to the Almighty and Eternal GOD for granting us the direction and guidance of the Holy Spirit throughout the long period of the assignment and enabling us to fulfil the purpose for which we were appointed. The Committee is grateful to the Directors and staff of the Ramseyer Training Centre in Abetifi and the Presbyterian Women's Centre in Abokobi for their assistance and goodwill which contributed immensely to the successful accomplishment of the great task.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GHANA CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GHANA

We would like to express our profound gratitude to the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana for offering us the opportunity to serve our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ and His Church in this area of His Vineyard. The basis of our delight in the assignment is the hope that it will contribute to the life and work of the Church.

In obedience to the command of the Lord Jesus Christ in Luke 17:10b we say: "We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty". All honour and praises and glory be to the LORD our GOD.

The Rev. Dr. Kofi Effa Ababio	-	Chairman
The Rev. Dr. Benjamin Abotchie Ntreh	-	Secretary
The Rev. Dr. Sam Prempeh	-	Member
Mrs. Grace Narrey	-	Member
The Rev. Emmanuel Sakite Mate-Kodjo	-	Member
Mr. Benjamin Samuel Kofi Kwakye	-	Member
Mrs. Justice Doris Owusu-Addo	-	Member
Mrs. Asie Allotey	-	Member/Drafter
The Rev. Peter Maugbi Kodjo	-	Co-opted Member
The Rev. Dr. Kwame Bediako	-	Co-opted Member

June 1998

NOW THEREFORE in pursuance of the above stated declaration this Constitution is hereby made:

ARTICLE 1

THE COURTS OF THE CHURCH

- o (1) The Church shall establish Courts of the Establishment of Courts which shall govern the Church.

(2) The Courts of the Church shall be:

 - (a) The Congregational Session;
 - (b) The District Session;
 - (c) The Presbytery; and
 - (d) The General Assembly.

THE CONGREGATION

(1) The church shall establish a Christian Fellowship of men which shall be a fellowship

- (1) The church shall establish a Congregation which shall be a fellowship of men, women, youth and children who confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour and agree to be bound by this Constitution.

- (2) There shall be established a congregational session

(3) The congregational session shall consist of

 - (a) the Agent of the Congregation who shall be the Chairperson;
 - (b) other Minister(s) with a charge in the Congregation
 - (c) Catechist(s) with a charge in the Congregation; and
 - (d) Presbyters.

Establishment of the Congregational Session

Members of the Congregational Session

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GHANA CONSTITUTION

Functions of the Congregational Session

- (4) The Congregational Session shall -
- (a) be responsible for the spiritual oversight of all members, and of all the work of the Congregation, the maintenance of Christian Order and discipline, and the administration of its temporal affairs;
 - (b) arrange for public worship and the observance of the Sacraments;
 - (c) promote the spread of the Gospel;
 - (d) examine and admit members to the Congregation;
 - (e) keep accurate roll of children, members in full communion, and non communicants, and revise the roll on a regular basis;
 - (f) take pastoral responsibility towards those who lapse from regular participation in the worship and service of the Congregation;
 - (g) every three years remove from the roll the names of persons who in spite of visits from the Session, shall show no interest, or shall not partake in the worship or shall abstain from communion;
 - (h) visit the sick, the needy, the aged, the bereaved and the distressed;
 - (i) manage, maintain and take due care of the properties of the Congregation;
 - (j) ensure the proper maintenance of the place of worship, Church institutional buildings, Congregational houses for the Ministers and other Agents;
 - (k) supervise all Groups in the congregation;

- (l) not recognise any group as Congregational unless that group has received the approval of the Session;
- (m) appoint a Congregational Session Clerk. Such a Clerk, if not a Presbyter, shall have no voting rights; and his/her tenure shall be co-terminous with the Session appointing him/her;
- (n) organise Congregational Forum (Fora) at least once a year;
- (o) elect delegates to District Session; and
- (p) interview and recommend candidates to the District Session for training into the Lay and Ordained Ministry.

(5) A Congregational Session shall have a lifespan of four years.

(6) The Congregational Session may meet once every week but shall meet at least once every month.

(7) The Chairperson shall preside over the meetings of the Congregational Session and in the absence of the Chairperson, another Minister, if any, or the Catechist.

(8) The quorum at every meeting shall be one half of the membership.

(9) The Congregational Session may at any time co-opt any person to its meeting but no person so co-opted shall be entitled to vote at the meeting.

(10) The validity of any proceedings of the Congregational Session shall not be affected by any vacancy in its membership or any defect in the appointment of any member thereof.

(11) Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the Congregational Session shall regulate its own procedure.

Establishment
of Departments
& Appointment
of Committees

(12) The Congregational Session shall for the efficient discharge of its functions, establish Departments, appoint Directors to these Departments, appoint Committees and assign to the Committees such functions as may be provided for under this Constitution.

(13) The Funds of the Congregation shall -

- (a) be administered by the Congregational Session; and
- (b) include tithe, offering, donation and income from any other approved source.

(14) All sums of money received on account of the Congregation shall be paid into such banks as the Congregational Session may determine.

(15) The Minister or the authorized Agent shall be the principal signatory to the Account; other signatories shall be the Director of Finance and a Presbyter.

(16) The Congregational Session may obtain loans and other credit facilities with the approval of the District Session and shall seek clearance and technical assistance from the District Session for all projects.

(17) The Congregational Session shall have an annual budget to support the mission of the Church, and shall ensure that all monies due to the District, the Presbytery and the Assembly are sent at the specified times to the District Director of Finance.

(18) The Congregational Session shall appoint a Director of Finance whose appointment may be reviewed annually.

(19) The Agents in charge shall be the principal signatories to all Group accounts at the congregational level and the Groups shall submit their audited accounts to the Session through their Departments.

(20) The Congregational Session shall keep proper books of accounts and proper records in relation thereto, and the account books and records shall be in such form as an Auditor may approve.

(21) The books and accounts of the Congregational Session shall, within three months after the end of each financial year, be audited by an approved External Auditor and the audited account presented to the congregation and the District Session.

(22) The financial year of the Congregational Session shall be from 1st January to 31st December of every year.