



# LEADERSHIP HANDBOOK

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DOVE International®  
11 Toll Gate Road, Lititz, Pennsylvania 17543 USA  
[www.dcfi.org](http://www.dcfi.org)

Any translation of this handbook shall be completed with the cooperation of the DOVE International Apostolic Council.

# Introduction to this handbook

After many years of serving the DOVE International family, a dedicated group of persons came together and began to record some important procedures that were found to be helpful to DOVE leaders throughout the world. These guidelines would be the outgrowth of years of learning through mistakes and experience, even as we were developing common values, common vision and goals and common methods. This handbook begins with our mission and values as a family of churches and ends with some helpful definitions.

The guidelines that follow are meant to be helpful as you grow leadership teams, multiply small groups and churches and develop ministry descriptions for those laboring alongside you. They are guidelines and not legal requirements. However, we have found them to be tested over time and helpful to those leadership teams that would incorporate them into church government and local church family life. Our twelve values—rooted in the Scriptures—sustain and unite us as a global spiritual family. The Bible says in Amos 3:3, “Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?”

The heart behind all that we do as servant leaders in the DOVE family worldwide is to serve as spiritual fathers and mothers. The cry of our hearts is to serve, train and release the next generation of leadership to fulfill God’s call for their generation with much grace and freedom. We firmly believe that our God is turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers (Mal. 4:5-6). Our desire is to follow the model of Jesus and lead as spiritual fathers and mothers.

God’s best to you as we walk together in the DOVE International family. This handbook will help us effectively and efficiently with commonality serve together to grow the kingdom of God around the world.

The DOVE International Apostolic Council

## I. What is DOVE International?

DOVE International, an international apostolic movement, is a family of churches and ministries comprised of people with various gifts who share common vision, mission, values, goals and a commitment to plant and nurture churches and ministries throughout the world. As DOVE International, we are called to build the church from house to house, city to city and nation to nation through small groups. This apostolic movement has a God-given authority and responsibility to serve, train, equip, release and protect the people, ministries and churches throughout the movement and advance the kingdom of God. DOVE is an acronym for “Declaring Our Victory Emmanuel.” We are called as an international family of churches and ministries to declare our victory in Emmanuel (God with us).

### Our Vision

To build a relationship with Jesus, with one another and to transform our world from house to house, city to city and nation to nation.

### Our Mission

#### Prayer, Evangelism and Discipleship

Our mission is to exalt Jesus Christ as Lord, to obey His Word and to encourage and equip each believer for the work of ministry. This mission will essentially be accomplished by the threefold mandate God has given us: prayer, evangelism and discipleship.

**Prayer:** In prayer we worship God, we bring our needs and the needs of the world to Him and we allow the Holy Spirit to transform us, to empower us and to reveal His specific strategies for fulfilling the Great Commission.

**Evangelism:** Through evangelism we seek to make known the glory of God and the name of Christ through verbal proclamation, publishing, the arts, acts of compassion and service both to our own neighbors and cities and also by going to the peoples of the world in cross-cultural mission. We desire to see children, youth and adults come to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, the un-evangelized hear the good news and churches planted in all nations.

**Discipleship:** Engaging in discipleship, we build relationships with and care for one another, training each other in godliness and good works, so that we would all be mature disciples engaged in the threefold mission of prayer, evangelism and discipleship. Discipleship thus becomes ongoing, as those who have been trained, in turn, will train and disciple others.

We engage in this mission in humility, with dependence on God and in cooperation with all brothers and sisters in the body of Christ, striving for unity in all that we do.

### Our Values

All values and guiding principles for the DOVE International family must be rooted in the Scriptures (II Tim. 3:16-17, II Tim. 2:15).

## **1. Knowing God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ and living by His Word is the foundation of life.**

We believe that the basis of the Christian faith is to know God through repentance for sin, receiving Jesus Christ as Lord, building an intimate relationship with Him and being conformed into His image. God has declared us righteous through faith in Jesus Christ (John 1:12, John 17:3, Rom. 8:29, II Cor. 5:21).

## **2. It is essential for every believer to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and be completely dependent on Him.**

We recognize that we desperately need the person, presence and power of the Holy Spirit to minister effectively in our generation. Changed lives are not the product of men's wisdom, but of the demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit as modeled in the New Testament (I Cor. 2:2-5, John 15:5). We believe it is essential for every believer to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and to pursue spiritual gifts (Luke 3:16, Acts 1:8, II Cor. 13:14, John 4:23-24).

All decisions need to be made by listening to the Holy Spirit as we make prayer a priority and learn to be worshippers. Worship helps us focus on the Lord and allows us to hear His voice more clearly.

We recognize that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against demonic forces. Jesus Christ is our Lord, our savior, our healer and our deliverer (Eph. 6:12, I John 3:8).

## **3. The Great Commission will be completed through prayer, evangelism, discipleship and church planting.**

We are committed to helping fulfill the Great Commission through prayer and fasting, evangelism, discipleship and church planting locally, nationally and internationally in order to reach both Jew and Gentile (Matt. 28:19-20, Matt. 6:5-18, Acts 1:8). We believe water baptism is essential for those who have chosen to follow Christ (Acts 2:38, Rom. 6:4 & Gal. 3:27).

We are called to support other co-laborers as churches are planted throughout the world. The Great Commission is fulfilled through tearing down spiritual strongholds of darkness and planting churches (I Cor. 3:6-9, Matt. 11:12, II Cor. 10:3-4, Acts 14:21-23).

We are also called to proclaim the gospel through the arts, publications, and the media and trust that God will continue to raise up other resources and ministries to assist us in extending His kingdom (I Cor. 9:19-22).

## **4. We deeply value the sacred covenant of marriage and the importance of training our children to know Christ.**

It is our belief God gives the gift of single life to some, and the gift of married life to others, all within the standard of holiness and purity (I Cor. 7). We believe mar-

riage is between one man and one woman. Both marriage and family are instituted by God, and healthy, stable families are essential for the church to be effective in fulfilling its mission. Parents are called by God to walk in the character of Christ and to train their children in the nurture and loving discipline of the Lord (Mark 10:6-8, Eph. 5:22-6:4).

The Lord is calling His people to walk in the fear of the Lord and in a biblical standard of holiness and purity. The covenant of marriage is ordained by God and needs to be honored and kept. (Prov. 16:6, Mark 10:9, I Thess. 4:3-8, I Cor. 6:18-20).

## **5. We are committed to spiritual families, spiritual parenting and intergenerational connections.**

Believing that our God is turning the hearts of the fathers and mothers to the sons and daughters in our day, we are committed to spiritual parenting on every level of ministry and church life (Mal. 4:5-6, I Cor. 4:15-17).

Participation in a small group or house church is fundamental to commitment to the DOVE family. The small group is a group of believers and/or families who are committed to one another and to reach others for Christ. We believe the Lord desires to raise up spiritual families in many levels including small groups, house churches, congregations, apostolic movements and the kingdom of God (I Cor. 12:18, Eph. 4:16).

We believe each spiritual family needs to share common values, vision, goals and a commitment to build together, and needs to receive ongoing training in these areas (Ps. 133, II Pet. 1:12-13, II Tim. 2:2).

We are committed to reaching, training and releasing young people as co-laborers for the harvest, as the young and the old labor together (Acts 2:17, Jer. 31:13).

## **6. Spiritual multiplication and reproduction must extend to every sphere of kingdom life and ministry.**

Multiplication is expected and encouraged in every sphere of church life. Small groups should multiply into new small groups and churches should multiply into new churches. Church planting must be a goal of every congregation (Acts 9:31, Mark 4:20).

The DOVE family of churches will be made up of many new regional families of churches as apostolic fathers and mothers are released in the nations and regions of the world (Acts 11:19-30, Acts 13-15).

## **7. Relationships are essential in building God's kingdom.**

Serving others and building trust and relationships are desired in every area of church life. We believe the best place to begin to serve and experience trust and relationship is in some type of small group experience (Acts 2:42-47, Eph. 4:16, Gal. 5:13).

We are joined together primarily by God-given family relationships, not by organization, hierarchy, or bureaucracy (I Pet. 2:5).

## **8. Every Christian is both a priest and a minister.**

We believe that the work of ministry belongs not to a select few, but is the responsibility of every believer. Every Christian is a priest who needs to minister to the Lord, hear from the Lord personally and minister to others (I Pet. 2:9, Rev. 1:5-6). This ministry starts in the home, which is a center for ministry.

Fivefold ministers are the Lord's gifts to His church. He uses fivefold persons to help equip each believer to become an effective minister in order to build up the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11-12).

## **9. A servant's heart is necessary for every leader to empower others.**

We believe every sphere of leadership needs to include a clear servant-leader called by God and a team who is called to walk together. The leader has the anointing and responsibility to discern the mind of the Lord that is expressed through the leadership team (II Cor. 10:13-16, Num. 27:16, I Pet. 5:1-4).

Leaders are called to listen to what the Lord is saying through those whom they serve as they model servant-leadership. They are called to walk in humility and integrity, in the fruit of the Spirit, and in the fear of the Lord (Acts 6:2-6, Acts 15, Matt. 20:26, Gal. 5:22-23).

We believe God raises up both apostolic overseers and partner church elders to direct, protect, correct and discipline the church. These leaders must model the biblical qualifications for leadership (Acts 15, Acts 6:1-4, I Tim. 3, Titus 1).

Leaders must purpose to equip, empower and release others, thereby encouraging every individual to fulfill his or her call from the Lord (Titus 1:5, I Tim 4:12-14). Those with other spiritual gifts—including administrative gifts—need to be released to serve on every level of church life (I Cor. 12).

We believe that we all need to submit to those who rule over us in the Lord and esteem them highly in love for their work's sake (Heb. 13:17, I Thess. 5:12-13).

## **10. Biblical prosperity, generosity and integrity are essential to kingdom expansion.**

Biblical prosperity is God's plan to help fulfill the Great Commission. The principle of the tithe is part of God's plan to honor and provide substance for those He has placed over us in spiritual authority. Those who are over us in the Lord are responsible for the proper distribution of the tithes and offerings (III John 2, Matt. 23:23, Heb. 7:4-7, Mal. 3:8-11, Acts 11:29-30).

We believe in generously giving offerings to support individuals, churches and ministries both inside and outside of the DOVE family. We encourage individuals, small groups, congregations and ministries to support fivefold ministers and missionaries in both prayer and finances (II Cor. 8:1-7, Gal. 6:6, Phil. 4:15-17).

We believe that every area of ministry and church life needs to be financially responsible and accountable to those giving them oversight in order to maintain a

high standard of integrity. Spiritual leaders receiving a salary from the church are discouraged from setting their own salary level (Gal. 6:5, Rom. 15:14, I Thess. 5:22, II Cor. 8:20-21).

## **11. The gospel compels us to send missionaries to the unreached and help those least able to meet their own needs.**

Jesus instructs us to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. Our mission is to reach the unreached areas of the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ by sending trained missionaries and through church planting. Together we join with the body of Christ to reach the unreached (Matt. 24:14, Acts 1:8, Acts 13:1-4, II Cor. 10:15-16).

We are also called to help the poor and needy, those in prison, orphans and widows. This includes local, national and international outreach. When we help the poor, both materially and spiritually, we are lending to the Lord (Deut. 14:28-29, Deut. 26:10-12, Matt. 25:31-46, James 1:27, Prov. 19:17).

## **12. We are called to build the kingdom together with the entire body of Christ.**

Our focus is on the kingdom of God, recognizing our small group, our local church and DOVE International as just one small part of God's kingdom. We are called to link together with other groups in the body of Christ and pursue unity in His church as we reach the world together (Matt. 6:33, Eph. 4:1-6, John 17, Ps. 133).

We wish to see God's kingdom come not just in and through the church, but in all areas of life. Therefore, we are called to minister in the church, the family, government, the arts, education, business and the media, so that all such spheres come under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and reflect the values of His kingdom (Matt. 6:10).

We believe in utilizing and sharing the human and material resources the Lord has blessed us with. This includes the fivefold ministry, missions, leadership training and other resources the Lord has entrusted to us (I Cor. 12, Acts 2:44-45).

Our unifying focus is on Christ, His Word and the Great Commission, and we believe we should not be distracted by minor differences (Romans 14:5). We recognize and honor the redemptive purpose of God found in many cultures and ethnicities (Rev. 5:9-10).

The Scriptures serve as a light to guide us, and our Statement of Faith and these values and guiding principles unite us as partner churches. Along with many churches and ministries, we also accept the Lausanne Covenant as a broad statement of evangelical belief. (Matt. 28:19-20, Amos 3:3, I Cor. 1:10, I Cor 15:10).

## **Statement of Faith**

**WE BELIEVE** the Bible to be the inspired, infallible, and authoritative Word of God. The Holy Spirit moved upon the writers of the Old and New Testament and inspired them as they wrote the Words of God. God's revelation in Christ and in scripture is

unchangeable. Through it the Holy Spirit still speaks today. (II Tim. 3:13-17; Heb. 4:12; Psalm 119:89, 105; I Pet. 1:23-25; Gal. 1:8-9; Matt. 5:18; Isa. 40:8)

**WE BELIEVE** that there is One God, eternally existent in three personalities: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God the Father—Creator of all things. By His Word all things were created and through the power of His Word all things are held together. He sent His Son Jesus to redeem mankind unto Himself. A relationship with God only comes through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of a virgin. He lived a sin-less life, and performed many miracles. He redeemed us by His atoning death through His shed blood, He ascended to the right hand of the Father, and He will personally return in power and glory. There is no other name given under heaven by which man must be saved. Holy Spirit—inspired the writers of the Bible, convicts the world of sin, teaches us all things and brings to our remembrance the Word of God. (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 44:6-8; Isa. 43:10; Matt. 3:16-17; Matt. 28:19; I Cor. 12:4-6; John 14:23, 25; I Tim. 6:15-16; I John 5:7)

**WE BELIEVE** that mankind is perishing because of sin, which separates him from God. But God loves all mankind, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should repent. Mankind can only be saved through a complete commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, being regenerated by the Holy Spirit. (Gen. 1:26, 31; Psalm 8:4-8; Gen. 3:1-7; Rom. 5:1, 12-21; Eph. 2:8-9; Acts 3:19-21; I Cor. 15:21-22; Gal. 6:14-15; II Cor. 5:17)

**WE BELIEVE** in the present infilling of the Holy Spirit to all believers who desire it. The Holy Spirit's ministry to the body of Jesus Christ gives power to live, witness, proclaim the gospel and make disciples. The Holy Spirit gives us power to cultivate a Christ-like character through the Fruit of the Spirit and to build up and mature the church through the miraculous gifts and ministries in this present day. (John 15:8-10; I Cor. 12:13; John 3:5-6; Acts 1:4-8; Acts 2:1-4; Acts 2:38-39; Luke 11:9-13; Joel 2:28, 29; I Cor. 12-14; Heb. 2:4)

**WE BELIEVE** that the local church is a body of believers brought together by the Holy Spirit as a visible part of the body of Christ and His church universal. The church is responsible to faithfully proclaim the whole Word of God in fulfilling the Great Commission, properly administer the elements, and humbly submit themselves to discipline, all for the glory of God. (Matt. 28:19-20; Rom. 12:4-5; I Cor. 12:27; Eph. 2:22; I Pet. 2:5, 9-10; Titus 2:14)

**WE BELIEVE** that all mankind shall give an account of their deeds in this earthly life before the judgment seat of Christ. Those with their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life will be eternally with God in His glory, those without their names written will be eternally separated from God and tormented. (I Thess. 5:13-17; Rev. 1:7; Acts 1:11; Rev. 20:10-15; II Cor. 5:10; II Thess. 1:7-10; Rev. 21:1-4)

## II. Leadership and Decision-Making

### God-Appointed Leadership

We see in the Scriptures that God appoints leaders over various spheres in His kingdom. God uses these leaders to make decisions that affect those whom they serve. These persons are called by God to lead through servanthood and influence. For example, husbands and wives are appointed by the Lord to give leadership to their families. The husband is appointed by God as the head of his wife, yet they lead the family as a team. He is called to lay down his life for his wife and children. A wise father and mother will listen to their children before making decisions that will affect them.

In the church, God is establishing teams of apostolic leaders and teams of elders who will pray and work together. DOVE International affirms both men and women in governmental positions of leadership (Rom. 16:1-7). We are called by the Lord to focus on the Great Commission, and believe that having both men and women in leadership empowers us to do this most effectively.

Clear headship is needed as these teams walk together in unity and listen to the wisdom of God that comes from those whom they serve. There is headship in every realm and sphere of God's kingdom. This person serves as the "primary vision carrier" for the team.

Both the Old and New Testaments give numerous examples of this leadership principle. The Scriptures tell us in Numbers 27:16, "Let the Lord...set a man over the congregation." Although Moses worked closely with a leadership team (Aaron and Miriam), he was clearly anointed by God to lead the children of Israel. In the New Testament in Acts 13:13, we read about Paul and his party being involved in establishing churches. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every church (Acts 14:23). In Acts 15:13-22, when the apostles and elders gathered together to make a doctrinal decision in the early church, after a time of discussion, James made the judgment as to what the decision should be. The other apostles and elders and the church confirmed the decision. Leaders in both the Old and New Testaments did not work alone, but with a team who served with them.

We use the analogy of a head, shoulders and body regarding church leadership. The "head" of every team needs to be "properly attached" to the shoulders (the others on the team) through a God-ordained relationship of trust and affirmation. The shoulders must be attached to the body, as the leadership team values those whom they serve by receiving their valuable input. If the head moves too far from the shoulders (by not honoring the team), or if the head is forced down (by the team not honoring the head), the body will experience a "pain in the neck." However, if the head is appropriately attached to the shoulders (through relationship, trust, servanthood, prayer and proper communication) and the shoulders properly support and affirm the head, the oil of the Holy Spirit will run down from the head to the shoulders to the body. As these servant leaders dwell together in the unity of Christ, God will command a blessing (Psalm 133).

## Decision-Making

Leadership teams should strive to receive the mind of the Lord through prayer and consensus whenever possible. However, there may be times when a consensus cannot be reached.

For example, a church could have an elder team of five that sets broad policy, appoints the small group leaders and ministry leaders and gives them freedom to lead the small groups and various ministries in the congregation within the policies agreed upon by the elder team. Although they try to reach complete agreement on every decision, they are not bound by the need for a unanimous decision. The entire team clearly recognizes the lead elder as the head, and after prayer and discussion, if the team cannot come to complete agreement, the lead elder makes a final decision. The senior leader is responsible to discern what the Lord is saying through the team who serves with him/her. The senior leader has final authority, not absolute authority. James the apostle seems to have had the same role in Acts 15. If there is conflict or an impasse in decision-making, the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council provides an outside court of appeal for the lead elder and the elders.

Although final decisions affecting the local church are made by the elders, the wisdom of God is often manifest in God's people in the church. Church leaders should draw from this wisdom before making decisions.

## Experience God's Blessing

These leadership principles apply to any sphere of church leadership—the DOVE International Apostolic Council, Regional/Specialized Apostolic Councils, the local elders, or the small group leaders. We encourage and welcome spouses of leaders who are serving in all levels of church leadership to attend team meetings in an advisory capacity. A wise leader will always desire to involve the whole leadership team in decision-making without abdicating his or her responsibility to lead. New Testament decision-making is explained in detail in the books *The Cry for Spiritual Mothers and Fathers* and *The Biblical Role of Elders for Today's Church*.

## III. DOVE International Apostolic Council

### Overall Vision and Focus

The DOVE International Apostolic Council is responsible for the overall vision, direction and focus of DOVE as a movement. This includes vision statements, mission statements, basic values and guiding principles for the movement. The DOVE International Apostolic Council also appoints Regional and Specialized Apostolic Councils as needed and leaders to lead these councils in various parts of the world.

God gives leadership roles in the church for the benefit of the body. The titles we use for these leaders can vary from one culture or nation to another. They simply help us clarify and identify the different roles and responsibilities specific leaders have.

## International Director

The DOVE International Apostolic Council is led by an apostolic leader who serves as the International Director.

### Appointment of the International Director

The International Director is called by God, qualified (I Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9), willing to fulfill this leadership responsibility and discerned through fasting and prayer. He is recognized and recommended by both the Apostolic Council and the Recognized Spiritual Advisors. The leaders of the next level of Regional and Specialized Apostolic Councils shall be in general agreement about the appointment of the International Director. If there is general affirmation at these three levels (DOVE International Apostolic Council, Recognized Spiritual Advisors and leaders of the next level of Regional/Specialized Apostolic Councils), then the person will be commissioned by the DOVE International Apostolic Council and the previous International Director or Recognized Spiritual Advisors. The International Director needs to be an active part of a small group and involved in the life of a local congregation or house church.

### Assistant Apostolic Leaders

There may be occasions when the International Apostolic Council or the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council recognizes that an individual would be an asset serving as an assistant to the International Director or the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council leader. This is not a position that needs to be filled, but an option to be utilized if a person is already essentially fulfilling this role. This assistant would be commissioned upon being confirmed by the apostolic leaders over him or her and receiving the general affirmation from those he/she serves.

### DOVE International Apostolic Council Member Appointment

DOVE International Apostolic Council members, both men and women, are called by God, qualified (I Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9) and willing to fulfill this leadership responsibility. Members are discerned through fasting and prayer and chosen by the International Director and the existing DOVE International Apostolic Council with the general confirmation of the next level of leaders of Regional/Specialized Apostolic Councils, other leaders that they desire to include in the process and the affirmation of Recognized Spiritual Advisors. The International Director is responsible to appoint the DOVE International Apostolic Council. All Apostolic Council members need to be active members of a partner church small group and active in the life of their local congregation or house church.

When the time comes for the International Director to be replaced by future leadership for DOVE International, the process of leadership transition will be led by the present International Director and the International Apostolic Council with the assistance of the Recognized Spiritual Advisors.

## **Recognized Spiritual Advisors**

A group of three to five spiritual advisors from outside of DOVE shall provide advice, counsel and accountability to the International Director and members of the DOVE International Apostolic Council. In cases of moral failure, irreconcilable disputes, disorderly conduct, apostasy or other fault on the part of the International Director or a member of the DOVE International Apostolic Council, two or more Recognized Spiritual Advisors as a team will work closely with the DOVE International Apostolic Council to bring mediation and/or possible suspension or removal of a DOVE Apostolic Council member. The Recognized Spiritual Advisors shall be appointed upon the unanimous decision of the DOVE International Apostolic Council and the general affirmation of the next level of leaders of the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Councils. Biannually, the DOVE International Apostolic Council and each spiritual advisor will mutually discern the call of God for the advisor to continue serving in this capacity. Advisors may serve continuously as long as there is mutual agreement and support for the vision of DOVE International. Either the DOVE International Apostolic Council or the Recognized Spiritual Advisors may at any time initiate the release of a Recognized Spiritual Advisor from service either for a specified period of time or permanently.

## **Terms and Terminations of International Apostolic Council Members**

DOVE International Apostolic Council members are called by God, qualified (1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9) and willing to fulfill this leadership responsibility. They should be willing to serve long-term with periodic evaluations. These evaluations will be overseen by the International Director and an evaluation team (if needed) that would be appointed by the DOVE International Apostolic Council and may consist of qualified persons other than themselves.

In the event of the necessity of termination of the responsibility of the International Director due to moral failure, irreconcilable disputes, disorderly conduct, apostasy, or other fault, the recognized spiritual advisors will give leadership to this process along with the other DOVE International Apostolic Council members in accordance with DOVE International's written policy for discipline and restoration.

In the case of sudden vacancy of the International Director, the DOVE Apostolic Council will select an Interim International Director along with the affirmation of the Recognized Spiritual Advisors. This Interim International Director would serve until the new International Director can be affirmed through the process outlined for the appointment of an International Director.

In the event of the necessity of termination of the responsibility of an Apostolic Council member due to moral failure, irreconcilable disputes, disorderly conduct, apostasy or other fault, the International Director along with the Recognized Spiritual Advisors and the other DOVE International Apostolic Council members will be responsible for this process in accordance with DOVE International's written policy for discipline and restoration.

## **Accountability for DOVE International Director and International Apostolic Council Members**

The International Director will be accountable to the other members of the DOVE International Apostolic Council and to a group of three to five Recognized Spiritual Advisors from outside the DOVE International family of churches. These spiritual advisors will not give oversight or authority to the vision, but will be available for accountability and in the case of moral failure and conflict.

The DOVE International Apostolic Council will be accountable to the International Director. Members will receive primary personal pastoral care for themselves and for their family from the eldership of the partner church to which they are committed.

In the event of unresolved conflict between the International Director and any of the DOVE International Apostolic Council members, and after following the principles outlined in Matthew 18:15-17, this group of Recognized Spiritual Advisors will serve with the DOVE International Apostolic Council in resolving the conflict.

Decisions regarding major changes (structure, doctrine and policies) will be made with input and general affirmation of the leaders of the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Councils. All decision-making will be based on the scriptural principles outlined in "Leadership and Decision-making," page 9.

## **Board Directed Ministries**

DOVE International may provide spiritual covering for various individuals and ministries who have received God-given visions within the values and guiding principles of DOVE International. These ministries will be given hands-on oversight by an independent governing board. The senior leader of the Board Directed Ministry will relate to the DOVE International Apostolic Council or to a Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council for the vision of the ministry and relate to the appropriate Stewardship Team, as applicable, for the legal and financial policies and the operations of the ministry. The majority of Board Directed Ministries receive spiritual covering from Regional/Specialized Apostolic Councils or from local churches.

## **DOVE Organization Board and Stewardship Team**

In order for the DOVE International Apostolic Council to focus on prayer, vision and direction for the movement, a DOVE Organization Board with the assistance of a Stewardship Team will fulfill the legal and financial policies of DOVE International and its operations according to the vision and purpose of the International Apostolic Council.

The DOVE Organization Board and the Stewardship Team function together to facilitate the vision through sound management principles.

Regional/Specialized Apostolic Councils may also have Stewardship Teams and/or organizational boards to help them if they deem this appropriate.

## **Apostolic Company**

The Apostolic Company consists of all DOVE International partner and engaged church lead elders, apostolic leaders, Recognized Spiritual Advisors, fivefold ministers, those licensed and ordained through DOVE, Stewardship Team and committees, missionaries and DOVE International staff.

## **Training for the Apostolic Company**

One value of the DOVE International family is that all those involved in leadership are properly equipped and trained in the scriptural principles that this movement is built upon. This could take place in the form of the DOVE Leadership and Ministry School, the DOVE Global Access School, videos, individual internship and/or prior educational training, and/or ministry experiences deemed to fulfill requirements. Apostolic Council members will discern individually what is best for each person and their ministry and will not be bound to fulfill a rigid set of educational regulations.

Lead elders of DOVE International partner churches and fivefold translocal ministers are encouraged to complete the DOVE Leadership and Ministry School in any format. The director of this school is available to advise the DOVE International Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council leaders as they work with each lead elder and fivefold minister who has had other ministry training experiences in modifying the training required for their particular situation.

The annual DOVE International Leadership Conference is available for impartation and relationship-building. Costs for participation in these conferences are the responsibility of the individual and/or the partner church.

## **Ministry Description for the DOVE International Apostolic Council**

1. Direction
  - a. Be responsible to the Lord to fulfill the vision, mission and goals the Lord has given to DOVE International.
  - b. Discern and pray about any changes in the basic vision, direction, values and guiding principles the Lord has called us to follow as a movement.
2. Spiritual Oversight
  - a. Lead by example as spiritual fathers and mothers.
  - b. Facilitate training and mentoring leaders.
  - c. Provide spiritual protection to leaders of Regional/Specialized Apostolic Councils.
  - d. Provide assistance during times of crisis for Regional/Specialized Apostolic Councils and leaders.
  - e. Initiate and plan international leadership meetings, conferences, etc.
  - f. Communicate on a regular basis with the Apostolic Company (those licensed, ordained and in other areas of leadership in DOVE International).
  - g. Give leadership to the engagement process with new Regional/Specialized Apostolic Councils and leaders in accordance with the guidelines of this handbook.

3. Establish new levels of apostolic councils (international, national, regional) in the future as needed.
4. Encourage church planting.
5. Initiate and encourage relationships in the body of Christ, serving and networking with the church at large.
6. Keep open communication with the Recognized Spiritual Advisors.

## **New Levels of Councils**

As DOVE International continues to grow there will be an ongoing need for new levels of apostolic councils (regional, national or specialized councils, etc.) that will be commissioned by the councils who oversee them. In some cases, the DOVE International Apostolic Council (or designates) will commission a leader for a sphere of apostolic oversight who will build an apostolic team for an area of ministry. Depending on the number of partner churches in a certain area, the DOVE International Apostolic Council (or designates) would decide if and when a new leader and new levels of councils are needed. Members of the DOVE International Apostolic Council (or designates) may serve as temporary mentors of this new team to assist in the building of the team until a more established council emerges. As new Apostolic Councils are commissioned and released throughout the world, the use of terminology understandable in the local setting and biblical practices agreed upon by their spiritual leaders (as long as they align with DOVE International values) will be upheld.

## **DOVE International Bylaws**

DOVE International will function within the parameters of the DOVE International Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. These are available by contacting DOVE International.

## **IV. Regional/Specialized Apostolic Councils**

### **Appointment of Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council Leaders**

The Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council Leaders, both men and women, are called by God, qualified (I Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9), willing to fulfill this leadership responsibility and discerned through fasting and prayer. They are recognized and recommended by both the DOVE International Apostolic Council and the church leaders they will oversee. If there is general affirmation among these groups, then they will be commissioned by members of the DOVE International Apostolic Council. In some cases, a Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council will appoint a Regional/Specialized Apostolic leader and Apostolic Council within their field of ministry. The Regional/Specialized Apostolic Leaders need to be active participants in a small group and involved in the life of their local congregation or house church.

## Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council Members Appointment

Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council members are called by God, qualified (I Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9) and willing to fulfill this leadership responsibility. Members are discerned through fasting and prayer with affirmation of the church leaders they will oversee. The Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council leader is responsible to appoint the Regional/Specialized Apostolic members with the general affirmation from the church leaders they oversee. In some cases, a Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council will appoint a Regional/Specialized Apostolic leader and Apostolic Council within their field of ministry. All Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council members need to be active participants in a partner church small group and active in the life of their local congregation or house church or a church having like values.

## Oversight for Regional/Specialized Apostolic Councils and Leaders

The Regional/Specialized Apostolic Councils and leaders will receive oversight for their ministry from the DOVE International Apostolic Council or the Regional/Apostolic Council that has appointed them. They will receive personal pastoral care for themselves and for their family from the eldership of the partner church to which they are committed.

## Terms and Terminations of Regional/Specialized Apostolic Councils

Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council members are called by God, qualified (I Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9) and willing to fulfill this leadership responsibility. They should be willing to serve long-term with a periodic evaluation.

In the event of the necessity of termination of the responsibility of a Regional Apostolic/Specialized Apostolic Council member due to moral failure, irreconcilable disputes, disorderly conduct, apostasy, or other fault, the leader of the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council along with the DOVE International Apostolic Council (or designate), along with the others serving on the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council, will be responsible for this process in accordance with DOVE International's written policy for discipline and restoration.

In the event of the necessity of termination of the responsibility of the apostolic leader who serves as the leader of the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council due to moral failure, irreconcilable disputes, disorderly conduct, apostasy, or other fault, the DOVE International Apostolic Council (or designate) will give leadership to this process along with the other Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council members in accordance with DOVE International's written policy for discipline and restoration.

In the case of the sudden vacancy of the leader of the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council, a DOVE International Apostolic Council member or designate will lead the process of selecting an interim leader along with the present Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council. This interim leader will serve until the new leader can be affirmed through the process outlined for the appointment of a Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council leader.

## Ministry Description for Regional/Specialized Apostolic Councils

1. Direction
  - a. Be responsible to the Lord to fulfill the vision, mission and goals the Lord has given to DOVE International.
2. Spiritual Oversight
  - a. Lead by example.
  - b. Facilitate training and mentoring leaders.
  - c. Facilitate the appointment and transition of partner church lead elders and eldership.
  - d. Provide spiritual protection to leaders of Regional/Specialized Apostolic Councils who serve under the leadership of this Apostolic Council, lead elders of partner and engaged churches and fivefold translocal ministers.
  - e. Appoint and oversee the director of the Regional Mission Center.
  - f. Provide assistance during times of crisis for partner churches or Board Directed Ministries.
  - g. Initiate evaluations as necessary.
  - h. Initiate and plan multi-national leadership meetings, conferences, etc. within their sphere of ministry.
  - i. Recognize, affirm, provide spiritual protection for and promote fivefold translocal ministries.
  - j. Give leadership to the engagement process with new churches in accordance with the guidelines of this Handbook.
3. Administrative Oversight
  - a. Oversee licensing and ordination process, evaluations, etc. within their sphere of ministry.
  - b. Establish new levels of Apostolic Councils (national, regional) in the future as needed within their sphere of ministry.
  - c. Appoint a Stewardship Team (as needed).
  - d. Approve yearly budgets (original and modified) for their sphere of ministry.
4. Encourage and provide oversight for church planting within their sphere of ministry
5. Relationships with the body of Christ
  - a. Initiate and encourage networking with and service to the church at large.
  - b. Keep open communication with the apostolic leaders who give them oversight.
6. Release new apostolic leaders. It is the vision of DOVE International to release many new apostolic leaders in multiple regions of the world. Regional apostolic leaders are responsible for this process within their region of responsibility, and could utilize any suitable model for the release of apostolic ministry.

## V. Partner Churches

A partner church consists of believers, involved in a small group (house church) or cluster of small groups, who receive leadership from a lead elder and an eldership team. The lead elder and eldership team are of like vision and purpose and called by God to partner together with other churches within the DOVE International family. They have the same values and mission as DOVE International including prayer, evangelism and discipleship (see DOVE International values beginning on page 3). Some DOVE International partner churches are small group-based community churches, others are small group-based mega churches, while still others are small group-based micro churches who network together.

### Name of the Partner Church

It is not required that the acronym “DOVE” be a part of the partner church’s proper name, but it is encouraged that the statement “partnering with DOVE International” or “partner church of DOVE International” accompanies the proper name if “DOVE” is not a part of the proper name.

### Partner Church Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws

Each partner church is responsible for their own Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. The Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws must be compatible with the DOVE International Bylaws and the *DOVE International Leadership Handbook*. Sample bylaws are available online at [www.dcfi.org](http://www.dcfi.org) articles for church leaders.

### Partner Church Assets and Real Estate

Each partner church is its own financial entity. All property, assets, real estate and liabilities are the responsibility of the partner church.

### Guidelines for Partner Church Staff

The partner church eldership team is responsible for the local staff. New staff are added by the final authority of the lead elder with the affirmation of the eldership team. The Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council is available for counsel, insight, recommendations, oversight and assistance if so desired by the partner church elders.

### Guidelines for Partner Church Ministries

The partner church eldership team is responsible for local ministries within the partner church. New ministries are added by the final authority of the lead elder with the affirmation of the elder team.

The Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council is available for counsel, insight, recommendations, oversight and assistance as needed.

## Finances and Budget

The budget of a partner church is the responsibility of the lead elder and the eldership team. It should be a balanced budget with excess finances being channeled into advancing the kingdom of God. The budget is to reflect the same values as established by the DOVE International Apostolic Council. To maintain integrity in finances it is highly recommended that accounts are regularly audited by accountants outside the church.

General Accounting Practices (GAP Rules) should be followed in order to maintain financial integrity. This includes proper accounts for all funds and proper accounting of those accounts. The lead elder as much as possible should have other people handling the actual monies, that is, two or more other trustworthy persons who count the offering, make deposits and sign checks. While final decisions on the use of finances rests with the lead elder and elder team, it is best that the lead elder not handle all of the details of carrying out financial activities.

### Partner Churches Relating to Regional/Specialized Apostolic Councils and Translocal Ministries

Partner church elders are encouraged to invite Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council members or designates and translocal fivefold ministers to equip the saints and edify the body of Christ on the congregational level, small group level and the leadership level. Many of these ministers are supported by “tent-making” or by a base support plus financial gifts and offerings. The Scriptures encourage us to give generous love offerings and/or honorariums for their spiritual service (I Tim. 5:17-18). The payment of travel costs should be mutually agreed upon by the parties involved.

### Adoption of Churches Steps to Becoming a Partner Church

1. The leadership team is encouraged to read the books written by Larry Kreider, *House to House*, which defines our vision and *The Cry for Spiritual Mothers and Fathers*, which defines our heart and explains why we do what we do.
2. The leadership team is encouraged to read and align with the *Biblical Foundation Series* by Larry Kreider. This defines our doctrine.
3. The leadership team needs to understand and have the same values as established by the DOVE International Apostolic Council. See DOVE International values beginning on page 3. The leadership team reads, understands and agrees with the procedures of DOVE International as outlined within this *DOVE International Leadership Handbook*.

4. If the potential partner church agrees with the values, vision, doctrine and procedure and is in unity with the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council, there needs to be a time set aside for prayer and waiting before the Lord to receive the Lord's confirmation before the engagement begins. An on-site personal visit with the potential engagement church and its leaders is recommended at this point.
5. If the Lord gives His confirmation, an engagement period begins. This lasts for one year and can be shortened or lengthened upon agreement.
6. The lead elder and the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council begin to build relationships. In some cases, the lead elder may relate to a designate appointed by the Apostolic Council.
7. Apostolic coverage begins with an established engagement period.
8. Tithing begins by the lead elder and the partner church at the beginning of the engagement period as per the guidelines for tithing on page 28.
9. The lead elder begins to relate to other DOVE International leaders within his or her geographical area.
10. If there is full agreement between Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council and the potential partner church's eldership team, a partnership agreement may be signed by two members of the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council and/or designates and the lead elder and the other elders of the partner church. A copy of this agreement can be obtained from the DOVE International Office. There will be a public commissioning service by one or more Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council member(s) and/or a designate(s) appointed by the Apostolic Council. There may be times when a church is a part of two movements for a season during transition. This process is worked out between the lead elder and elder team, the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council and the leadership of the other movement.

### **Adoption of Movements**

The same basic process is used in the DOVE International family to adopt a movement as is used to adopt a partner church. This process may take longer due to the number of persons involved in the adoption process involving potential apostolic leaders and lead elders.

### **Steps to Withdrawal and Dismissal**

In the event of a DOVE International Partner Church desiring to withdraw from the DOVE International family of churches or if the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council member overseeing the lead elder of the partner church is recommending dismissal, another Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council member or designate should be part of the process. If there is a sense that the Lord is changing the partner relationship, then the process of withdrawal or dismissal shall be established. A lead

elder cannot withdraw the partner church from DOVE International without the affirmation of his eldership team. A partner church cannot be dismissed without the affirmation of this decision by the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council. This decision is to be in accordance with the principles set forth in this handbook in the section titled Leadership and Decision-Making on page 9.

The following steps are to guide those involved through the withdrawal or dismissal process. These steps can be modified by mutual agreement of the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council and the partner church elders.

1. Member(s) or designate(s) of the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council should meet with the lead elder. This meeting will further evaluate the need for withdrawal or dismissal.
2. Member(s) or designate(s) of the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council should meet with the lead elder and the eldership team.
3. The time frame of withdrawal or dismissal should generally be no less than three months and not more than six months unless otherwise agreed upon.
4. If deemed necessary, the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council or designate(s) should meet with the partner church small group leaders and any fivefold translocal ministers in the partner church (along with the lead elder and elders) in order to explain the reason for withdrawal or dismissal, the process, and answer any questions.
5. If possible, the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council or designate(s) should meet with the congregation (along with the lead elder and elders) in order to explain the reason for withdrawal or dismissal, the process, and answer any questions.
6. A decommissioning takes place publicly (a releasing of spiritual authority) with Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council member(s), designates and partner church elders.
7. A general climate of affirmation of DOVE International and the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council to the former partner church, and the former partner church to DOVE should exist as much as possible.
8. The Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council is released of spiritual responsibility for the lead elder, elders and fivefold translocal ministers within the partner church.
9. The Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council either transfers the elders' and fivefold translocal ministers' ordination and ministerial license credentials to another ordination group, or will need to cancel this affirmation of spiritual covering for these ministers or discuss an agreed time frame for transfer with the regional apostolic leader.
10. The former partner church may not use DOVE as part of its name. Any documents bearing the DOVE name would have to be changed.

## VI. Leadership of Partner Churches

### Ministry Description of a Lead Elder\*

The lead elder/senior elder/senior pastor (\*we encourage using terminology that is consistent with each culture respectively), being either male or female, along with the elder team, has the responsibility to oversee the governing of their church. Along with the elders, he/she is responsible for direction, protection and correction in that local body. The lead elder's accountability comes from the Apostolic Council he/she relates to as well as from the local elder team. The relationship of the lead elder with the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council needs to be one of prayer, affirmation, encouragement and personal in nature (Heb. 13:7, 17). With input from the elder team, a ministry development evaluation should be conducted every two to three years by the Apostolic Council or a designate.

The lead elder receives accountability both personally and for his or her ministry from the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council or a designate. The book *The Biblical Role of Elders for Today's Church* covers a wide range of topics concerning training and scriptural insights on eldership in the local church.

### Appointment of Lead Elders

The lead elder should be called by God, qualified (I Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9) and willing to fulfill this leadership responsibility. The lead elder should be discerned through fasting and prayer and be recognized and recommended by both the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council and the other elders/leadership team at that local congregation. The small group leaders should be in general agreement about the appointment of the individual. The congregation should be given an opportunity to give their input about the appointment by contacting the elders of the congregation or a member of the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council. If there is general affirmation at all four levels (Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council, elders, small group leaders, and congregation), then the person will be appointed to the office by the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council. All lead elders need to be an active part of a small group and a DOVE International partner church and will be licensed or ordained through their Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council.

### Pastoral Oversight and Accountability for Lead Elders

The lead elder is to be accountable to and receive spiritual oversight from the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council or designate who is responsible to oversee him or her. Fivefold translocal ministers could also serve as an extension of the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council to help serve the lead elders adequately. There is also a level of accountability that comes from the local eldership team (I Peter 5:1-3), but the principal oversight for the lead elder will come from the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council.

In the event of the necessity of termination of the responsibility of a lead elder due to moral failure, irreconcilable disputes, disorderly conduct, apostasy or other fault, the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council will give leadership to this process along with the other elders in accordance with a written policy for discipline and restoration. In the case of sudden vacancy of the lead elder position, the present elders, having the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council's affirmation, will select an interim lead elder who will serve until the new lead elder can be affirmed through the outlined process.

### Regional Lead Elders Gatherings

When a partner church is located within the same geographical area as another DOVE International partner church(es), the senior leaders and their spouses are strongly recommended to meet together for prayer, fellowship and encouragement on a regular basis. The Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council will be responsible to establish guidelines and appoint leadership for these regular gatherings of leaders of DOVE International partner churches.

### Guidelines for Transition of a Lead Elder

These guidelines are given to help in the process of leadership transition, as we remain flexible and open to further revelation by the Holy Spirit. As the New Testament seems to imply that elders come from within the local church, this pattern seems to provide the best transition. However, there may be times when an individual comes from outside the local church to serve as lead elder.

1. When the lead elder of a partner church believes the Lord is calling him or her to another field of ministry, the lead elder should communicate this with the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council or a designate.
2. The Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council or the designate and the lead elder will pray and communicate about the process of a new lead elder being trained and selected. If the lead elder has a person to recommend, he/she communicates this with the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council or the designate handling the transition process. A Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council member or designate then meets with the current lead elder and the elder team to pray and discuss the transition. Fasting and prayer needs to be a vital part of this process, with sufficient time taken for all concerned. Every current elder on the team is given an opportunity to share their discernment regarding whom they believe the Lord may be calling to leadership.
3. The potential lead elder should be prayerfully evaluated by the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council member or designate. A lead elder should have a good relationship with others, especially small group leaders, meet biblical qualifications and embrace the same basic values as DOVE International.
4. If there is confirmation, the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council member or designate and/or the present lead elder share with the new potential lead

elder, who then takes time to pray about this call to leadership. In most cases, this potential lead elder would already be on the elder team. If he/she confirms this call, the current lead elder and a Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council member or designate communicate and update the process, first with the small group leaders and then with the congregation.

5. The small group leaders and the congregation need to take time to fast and pray and share their affirmation regarding this new potential lead elder. If there is general affirmation, the process can continue. If there is not general affirmation, the partner church elders and the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council member or designate need to seek the Lord for further direction. If there is no one within the present elder team or congregation who could serve as a lead elder, the apostolic overseer and elders will appoint someone from the present elder team or the apostolic leader will serve as interim lead elder until a lead elder is appointed. The present elder team and apostolic overseer will commit to maintaining the vision of the local church, pray, fast and work together toward identifying a new lead elder who is called to this position.
6. If the small group leaders and the congregation affirm this individual being called as a lead elder, the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council member or designate (and the outgoing lead elder if possible) will help the new lead elder, the elders, and the congregation walk through the transition smoothly. This should include a prayer of blessing and affirmation for the new lead elder and release for the elder who is moving out of primary leadership.
7. The new leader, with assistance from the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council or designate, makes the decision regarding the future elder team. In most cases, the former elders will continue to serve. However, there may be times when a new elder team will be installed.
8. If the new lead elder has not completed a DOVE Leadership and Ministry School or DOVE Global Access School online, it would be desirable to participate in a school.

### **Ministry Description for Partner Church Elders**

The elders are responsible to govern the partner church along with the lead elder. They also provide support and accountability for the lead elder. They are in a position of authority and responsibility for that local church. The elders are responsible for care and nurturing of the local body along with vision and direction, while providing servant leadership to the church. They support the lead elder by giving counsel and input and helping to give direction, protection and correction to the local body. They are accountable to the lead elder. In the event of a problem or a concern about the lead elder, the elders have a court of appeal with their Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council according to the principles outlined in Matthew 18:15-17.

The elders are responsible to support, train, encourage, uplift and be available for the small group leaders as the need arises. They ultimately carry the responsibility for the small groups as they are responsible for the people. Elders must communicate frequently and openly with small group leaders to maintain relationship and accountability. They may utilize resources provided by the DOVE International Apostolic Council, Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council and Fivefold Translocal Ministry, as well as other resources from the body of Christ. The Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council facilitates the working with the lead elder to help discern and recommend resources and individuals available to train and equip small group leaders.

### **Appointment of Elders**

Elders, both men and women who serve with the lead elder, should be called by God, qualified (1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9) and willing to fulfill this leadership responsibility. Each elder should be discerned through fasting and prayer and recognized and recommended by both the lead elder and the other elders. Their recommendation should then be taken to the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council member giving oversight or designate for confirmation (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5). The small group leaders should be in general agreement about the appointment of the individual. The congregation should then have the opportunity to give their input about the appointment by contacting the lead elder or one of the elders of the congregation. If there is general affirmation on all four levels (Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council, elders, small group leaders and congregation), then the person will be appointed to the office by the lead elder. All elders need to be an active part of a small group. It is strongly recommended that anyone who desires to serve as an elder first serve as a small group leader or assistant leader.

### **Accountability for the Elder Team**

With guidance from the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council, decisions regarding major changes (structure and policies) will be made by the lead elder and the elders with the input and general affirmation of the small group leaders and the congregation. All decision-making is based on the scriptural principles of leadership and decision-making as outlined on page 9 of this handbook. In the event of unresolved conflict between the lead elder and any of the elders, the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council will serve as an outside court of appeal. The lead elder has the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council to help if there is a need for discipline of an elder due to moral failure, irreconcilable disputes, disorderly conduct, apostasy or other fault.

Elders will have evaluations as needed (evaluation is recommended every two or three years) to make sure they are functioning properly and in unity as a team. The lead elder will be responsible to conduct this evaluation in cooperation with the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council or a designate, an evaluation team or any combination.

## **Training for Lead Elders and Elders**

The Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council is responsible to oversee the training of the lead elder, and the lead elder is responsible to oversee training of the elders who serve with him or her. Training for lead elders and elders could come in several ways: personal input from the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council, formal training (any format of the DOVE Leadership and Ministry School, conferences, special training sessions, DOVE International seminars and leadership materials), mentoring or translocal ministry specialists.

## **Relational Connection for Spouses of Lead Elders**

Some apostolic leaders and their spouses serve together in giving oversight to church leaders and giving relational connection to the spouses of leaders. Other apostolic leaders may be single or their spouse may not be called to minister in this way. In these cases, we encourage the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council to pray and ask God for others who can serve as delegates to help provide relational connection to spouses of lead elders.

## **Small Groups**

Small groups consist of a small number of people in relationship who meet regularly for prayer, evangelism and discipleship, providing an environment that gives personal accountability and commitment. The group is given leadership by a small group leader with the help of assistant leaders. The group is accountable to and given oversight by the local elders of the partner church. Some partner churches are community churches, while others may be mega churches or micro churches that network together. The small group (or cell group) is the basic building block of the local church.

## **Ministry Description for Small Group Leaders**

Small group leaders need to be committed to Jesus Christ and to the vision of the partner church where they serve. They are responsible to serve the believers in their small group, setting the example in prayer, evangelism and discipleship. They will receive oversight from and work with the elders in their partner church to pray, reach the lost, make disciples and strategically plan for the small group to multiply and raise up new small group leaders and assistant leaders. The elder team of the partner church is responsible if discipline is needed for the small group leader.

## **Deacons**

The qualifications for deacons are listed in I Timothy 3:8-13. Deacons are called by God and recognized by partner church elders. The deacons, after general affirmation by the small group leaders and congregation, would be set apart by the local elders.

Deacons (this term also includes deaconesses) minister to the needs of the members of the local body of believers, seeing to their welfare materially and spiritually, serving under the direction of the elders. They may take care of the administrative, business

and material needs of the congregation or ministry. Deacons serve as catalysts to stimulate, organize, lead, train and focus the ministry and service of the body as well as individual believers in their ministry for Christ. Every congregation is free to discern if there is a need to utilize the office of a deacon.

## **Commissioned Worker**

The partner church holds the authority to commission workers and is spiritually responsible for them and their training. A person could be commissioned to work in various areas of ministry including youth work, small group ministry, prison ministry, hospital visitation or other areas of ministry. We encourage an annual review for commissioned workers.

## **Guidelines for Discipline and Restoration**

DOVE International has established clear biblical guidelines for discipline and restoration of church leaders and church members. The goal of all discipline is restoration. These guidelines are available online at [www.dcfi.org](http://www.dcfi.org) articles for church leaders. They can be applied as deemed suitable in each particular culture and situation.

# **VII. Fivefold Translocal Ministry**

## **Ministry Description**

According to Ephesians 4:11-12, the five ministry gifts of the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher are called by the Lord to equip the saints to minister and to encourage the body of Christ.

## **Affirmation and Accountability**

Fivefold ministers, being both men and women who have proven ministries and are recommended by their eldership as having a broader sphere of ministry than to their own small group and congregation, may be recognized and affirmed by the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council to serve translocally. Fivefold translocal ministers who are affirmed by the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council will relate to the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council for their ministry and to the local eldership where they are ministering during their ministry. They will be accountable for their personal lives to the elders in the partner church to which they are committed.

Small groups and local congregations need the impartation of the Word of God that comes through the fivefold ministry gifts. We encourage small group leaders and lead elders of partner churches to invite fivefold translocal ministers into their small groups and congregations to minister on a regular basis. The Scriptures encourage us to give these translocal ministers generous love offerings and/or honorariums for their spiritual service.

## VIII. Tithes and Offerings

A tithe is a tenth of one's income for the support of the church. The tithe is a type of firstfruits, given before any other designated gifts or offerings. In the New Testament, tithing is upheld as an issue of the heart and honor rather than being a requirement of the law. Members of DOVE International partner churches give tithes and offerings to support the vision, mission, leadership and ministry of their local church. In the same way, partner churches give tithes (a tenth of the tithes and undesignated offerings) to support the vision, mission, leadership and ministry of the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council or Team that gives them oversight. This principle of tithing to the Apostolic Council or Team that gives them oversight continues through to each level of leadership that oversees them in the DOVE International family.

Tithes and offerings honor and provide for those who give us spiritual oversight as we labor together in relationship with one another. Lead elders should separate their tithes and offerings. Lead elders tithe to the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council that gives them oversight. Lead elders give offerings to their local church. Spouses of lead elders should pray and discern whether they should tithe to their local church or to the Apostolic Council/Team that gives them oversight. Spouses of lead elders could alternatively give a portion of their tithe to both.

When a new church is being planted from an existing DOVE International church, the regional apostolic overseer, along with the sending church lead elder and the church plant lead elder, shall discern if the new church plant's tithe and the new lead elder's tithe shall go to the regional apostolic team, the sending church, or be shared by some percentage between the two. This may depend on the amount of oversight the new church plant is receiving from either one. In the event that a tithe creates financial hardship for either the lead elder or the church due to pre-existing financial commitments, there is the possibility of a graduated increase from a starting point of an agreed percentage until a full tithe is given.

DOVE International fivefold translocal ministers, Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council members who are not lead elders and the International Director all receive spiritual oversight from two different "storehouses." The local church is responsible for these leaders' personal lives, while the next level of apostolic covering gives accountability for ministry. In honor of the principle of tithing into the storehouse, it is recommended that these individuals give one-half of their tithe to their local church and one-half of their tithe to the Apostolic Council/Team that gives them oversight. In the case of the International Director, the second half of the tithe is to be given to the DOVE International budget for Recognized Spiritual Advisors. Tithes in the DOVE International family are not given to individual persons, but to the apostolic council/team that provide spiritual oversight.

Regional apostolic overseers and council/team members are responsible for the use of the tithes given into the regional apostolic account. The International Director,

along with the DOVE International Apostolic Council, is responsible for the use of the tithes given into the DOVE International Apostolic account.

As church members tithe and give offerings to the local church, finances are released to support the mission of the local church. As local churches tithe and give offerings to apostolic ministry, finances are released to honor and support apostolic ministry. Fivefold translocal ministers need to receive financial substance in order to take adequate time in the Word, in prayer and in ministry.

Each DOVE International partner church should give liberal offerings to DOVE Missions in order to release finances to reach the unreached with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## IX. World Missions

The vision and mission of DOVE International, as stated in this handbook, will be fulfilled as we multiply churches, ministries and workers to go and make disciples in nations. This will include cross-cultural mission, especially to the least evangelized peoples. DOVE is, and desires to grow as, a missionary and church-planting movement to all peoples (Matt. 28:18-20). We anticipate that to be such a movement will include evangelizing through different media, facilitating indigenous church-planting networks among the nations and establishing works of compassion which effectively demonstrate the love of Christ.

In light of this we desire all churches to develop a missions vision and to mobilize their people to pray for, give to and go to the nations. Such mobilization includes sending both short-term and long-term workers to help fulfill the missionary task.

### Regional Missions Centers

Acknowledging that it can be difficult for individual churches to further the above vision on their own, and believing in the effectiveness of sharing expertise and resources as we focus on cross-cultural mission, it is the goal of the DOVE family to establish regional mission centers in different areas of the world. The objectives of these regional mission centers are:

1. To support and help each local congregation in its region develop a vision for cross-cultural mission, including prayer and financial commitment to the mission center, mission projects and missionaries.
2. To bring the missionary needs of the world to the churches to create opportunity for greater mobilization.
3. To prepare, train and send missionaries, both short-term and long-term.
4. To provide ongoing care and oversight of missionaries on the mission field.
5. To pioneer, develop and oversee new projects and churches among the nations.

Each regional mission center shall be established by, and responsible to, the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council for that region. A leadership team for that center should also be established by the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council. Appointments are made according to the values previously stated in this handbook.

A Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council may appoint a director to lead the regional mission center. Such a person should be called by God, qualified (1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9), willing to fulfill this leadership responsibility and discerned through fasting and prayer. The director will receive oversight from the leadership team and Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council. The director shall lead the ministry of the center to achieve the goals and objectives of the center in accordance with the values of the center and of the DOVE family.

## X. Planting New Churches

Church planting is essential to the vision of DOVE International. There are many models for adding new churches:

1. An individual partner church is encouraged to plant new churches.
2. A group of partner churches is encouraged to plant new churches.
3. Missionaries are encouraged to plant new churches.
4. Students who have completed the DOVE Leadership and Ministry School or the Global Access School are encouraged to plant new churches.
5. Regional or Specialized Apostolic Council members are encouraged to plant new churches.
6. Churches will be added through “adopting” churches whose leaders have the same values as DOVE International.

The DOVE International Apostolic Council and Regional/Specialized Apostolic Councils must take an active role in planting churches. Some church plants will receive oversight from their Regional/Specialized Apostolic Councils, while others will receive apostolic oversight from the lead elder who sends the church out to be planted (or from the lead elder responsible for adopting the church).

A lead elder would need to be put in place before a new church can become a partner church. Spiritual authority and appointment of leadership should come from the DOVE International Apostolic Council or from a Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council. If new church plants come out of an already established partner church, mutually agreed-upon transitional support roles and procedures between the DOVE International Apostolic Council or Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council need to be in place.

## XI. Guidelines for Ministry Credentials and Evaluations

### Ordination

Ordination is an act of Regional/Specialized Apostolic Councils in which individuals receive affirmation for their call to a lifetime of ministry as they serve faithfully in the DOVE International family of churches. This affirmation gives them the right to perform the duties of their office and any other ministerial functions within the scope and practices of DOVE International. Each Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council holds the authority to ordain and is spiritually responsible for all ordained persons and their spiritual training. Ordination is not, however, synonymous with an appointment to eldership. In most cases, the person should be involved in active ministry for at least two years before ordination. Requests for ordination could come from the local eldership, the individual or a member of the Regional /Specialized Apostolic Council.

A request for ordination should be submitted to the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council. If affirmed, an ordained minister’s card and certificate will be issued. A new ordination card is given to the ordained minister every five years.

Continuing education could take the form of seminars, a leadership school, seminary classes, self-study courses, workshops, etc. The costs of this training would be the responsibility of the ordained individual.

NOTE: In each nation, relevant terminology equivalent to the concept of ordination should be used.

### Licensing

Licensing is an act of a Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council in which individuals receive affirmation for their call to ministry for a one-year period. This affirmation gives them the right to perform the duties of their office and any other ministerial functions within the scope and practices of DOVE International. The Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council holds the authority to license and is spiritually responsible for all licensed persons and their spiritual training. The request for licensing a person for ministry within a partner church would come from the eldership of the partner church. In the event of church planting, the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council may initiate licensing leadership of the new church. A request should be submitted to the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council. If affirmed, a licensed minister’s card will be issued to the individual. In some nations, licensing is not applicable.

Continuing education could take the form of seminars, a leadership school, classes, self-study courses, workshops, seminary, etc. The costs of this training would be the responsibility of the licensed individual.

NOTE: In each nation, relevant terminology equivalent to the concept of licensing should be used.

## Transfers of Ordination

An adopted partner church lead elder shall be ordained through the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council that provides oversight. This could be done by transfer or by a new ordination if the lead elder wishes to keep credentials with another organization.

All other requests for transfer should be evaluated individually by the Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council.

## Ministry Evaluations

Through the process of evaluation, it is our desire to identify and affirm strengths as well as areas of needed growth at every level of leadership. Evaluation provides a means through which to assess our progress in fulfilling the mission God has given us. Evaluation helps to clarify areas for growth and, if necessary, redefine our current sense of God's call. Also, the evaluation helps provide clarity of roles and responsibilities. As areas of growth and goals are identified, they become a premise for subsequent evaluations.

Ministry development evaluations are to be conducted annually, biannually, or as often as needed as discerned by the leadership team on all levels of leadership in order to support the development and growth of leaders at all levels. Each leader's overseer should initiate and coordinate the evaluation process and criteria.

**Additional resource:** *Church Leadership and Staff Evaluation Tools* by Steve Prokopchak (House to House Publications).

## XII. Sabbatical Guidelines for DOVE International

### Definition and Purpose

The term "sabbatical" is from the Hebrew word *Shabbat* which means "to rest." According to Exodus 16:23, it was a day set aside for rest and was considered as holy and unto the Lord. A sabbatical is an extended leave of absence from full-time or part-time ministry. The purpose of a sabbatical is to renew the leader and his or her family spiritually, physically and emotionally. It is a time to reflect on the past and present and to renew vision and retool for the future. This can include reading, taking classes or attending a conference or seminar.

### Frequency/Length

It is recommended that sabbaticals be taken at seven year intervals.

The length of a sabbatical can be determined by the individual taking the sabbatical and the leaders of the local church, along with the apostolic overseer. Generally, a sabbatical would not exceed three months and not be less than two months. The church leader, who is supported by the church, receives his or her full salary and benefits during the sabbatical. Compensation for counseling, travel, training or other related expenses should be considered by the overseers.

## Preparation

It is ideal for a sabbatical to be requested and planned for six to twelve months prior to the start of the sabbatical. This will allow preparation for interim persons to serve and will facilitate budgetary planning.

The individual's and family's needs (for example education, training, counseling and finances) should be established before the sabbatical begins. Based on this assessment, an outline can be designed for the purpose, goals, intention and needs of the individual who is taking a sabbatical.

Before a sabbatical begins, the person who will oversee the individual and provide accountability checkups while on sabbatical should be decided.

## Qualification

Sabbaticals are for persons serving in full-time or part-time ministry such as apostolic, pastoral, evangelistic or missionary ministry.

## Supervision and Evaluation

Supervision throughout the sabbatical is important. A supervisor provides the necessary accountability for the person(s) taking sabbatical.

An evaluation overview is to be performed two weeks before the predetermined end of the sabbatical to assess further needs of the person(s) taking sabbatical and whether or not there is a need to extend the sabbatical. A final evaluation at the close of the sabbatical can help process the predetermined goals of this time and provide for feedback. This evaluation meeting should also serve as a transition back into ministry roles.

## Reentry

Entering back into one's ministry description can be a challenge after a completed, successful sabbatical. We encourage persons completing a sabbatical to have a re-entry meeting with those to whom they are accountable along with those persons they work alongside.

**Additional resource:** *The Value of a Sabbatical* by Steve Prokopchak.

## **XIII. Definition of Terms**

### **Apostolic Company**

The Apostolic Company consists of all DOVE International partner and engaged church lead elders, apostolic leaders, Recognized Spiritual Advisors, fivefold ministers, those licensed and ordained through DOVE, Stewardship Team and committees, missionaries and DOVE International staff (Acts 15:22).

### **Community Church**

A community church is a church that serves its local community, meets in a building on a regular basis, and usually consists of up to 1,000 people. In small group-based community churches, every believer is committed to a small group.

### **Deacons**

Deacons minister to the needs of the members of the local body of believers, seeing to their welfare materially and spiritually. Deacons serve under the direction of partner church elders (I Tim. 3:8-13).

### **DOVE International Apostolic Council**

This group of individuals is responsible for the overall vision and focus of DOVE International as a movement. This includes vision statements, mission statements, basic values and guiding principles for the movement. According to the New Testament, apostles lay a foundation. These individuals are gifted to give spiritual counsel, protection, admonition and oversight to local leadership teams and to Regional/Specialized Apostolic Councils (I Cor. 3:10-11, II Cor. 10:13).

### **Elders**

Elders are individuals who are responsible to govern the partner church along with the lead elder. They provide some accountability for the lead elder and they are in a position of authority and responsibility for that local church. These individuals are responsible for the care and nurture of the local body. They also provide vision, direction, and servant leadership to the church. They are to support the lead elder by giving counsel and input and helping to give direction, protection and correction to the local body. They are accountable to the lead elder (I Peter 5:1-4, Acts 20:17, 28, Acts 11:30).

### **Fivefold Translocal Ministers**

The five ministry gifts of the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher are persons called by the Lord to equip the saints to minister and encourage the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11-12). Fivefold ministers who have proven ministries and are recommended by their elder team as having a broader sphere of ministry than to their own small group and congregation may be recognized and appointed by their Regional/Specialized Apostolic Council.

### **International Director**

This individual gives primary leadership to the DOVE International Apostolic Council (Acts 15:1-35).

### **Lead Elder**

The lead elder has the primary responsibility to govern the partner church and gives primary leadership to the elder team and small group leaders (Num. 27:16, Acts 21:18).

### **Marriage**

The DOVE International family of churches continues to stand on the biblical definition of the marriage union as being a holy, heterosexual covenant between one birth-gender male and one birth-gender female. This orthodox belief regarding marriage as being between one man and one woman is based on the teachings of the Bible, and is stated in the DOVE International values (Gen. 1:27, Gen. 2:24, Matt. 19:4-6). Although culture may change, the church must base her ethical and moral position on the timeless truths divinely inspired and revealed in the Bible. While same-sex marriage and unions are legalized in some nations of the world, DOVE International does not regard this belief to be in keeping with God's intention and creation of marriage. At the same time, we value all individuals and desire to effectively minister God's love and healing to everyone.

### **Mega Church**

This is generally a church that serves a wider area, consisting of more than 1,000 believers. In a small group-based mega church, every believer is committed to a small group.

### **Micro Church (House Church)**

A house church is a small reproducing church with biblical eldership focused on evangelism and discipleship and rapid church planting that utilizes cell groups for practical discipleship and leadership training. Micro churches (house churches) network together with other micro churches within their region under apostolic leadership (I Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15).

### **Partner Church**

A partner church consists of believers involved in a cluster of small groups that receive leadership from a lead elder and an elder team who are committed to the DOVE family (I Cor. 4:17, II Cor. 10:13-16).

### **Recognized Spiritual Advisors**

This group of individuals from outside DOVE gives accountability, counsel and advice to the International Director and the DOVE Apostolic Council (Prov. 11:14).

### **Regional/Specialized Apostolic Councils and Leaders**

As new churches are planted throughout the world, new apostolic team leaders and Apostolic Councils are raised up by God to oversee these new lead elders of partner churches in their region of the world.

**Small Group**

This reproducing group consists of a small number of people who are in relationship and meet regularly for prayer, evangelism and discipleship, providing an environment to give personal accountability and commitment. The group is given leadership by a leader with the help of assistant leaders. The small group is accountable to and given oversight by the local elders of the partner church (Acts 20:20, Acts 2:46, Rom. 16). (Various names are used for these groups such as life groups, small groups, home groups or cell groups.)

**Stewardship Team**

This team will help fulfill the legal and financial policies of DOVE International and its operations, according to the vision, direction and purpose of the DOVE Apostolic Council (Acts 6:1-7).