

# **The United Church of God, *an International Association***

---

## **MEMBER APPEAL COMMITTEE – SCOPE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **OVERVIEW**

On November 12<sup>th</sup> 1996 (amended December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1999), the Council of Elders of the UCG/A established a policy and process whereby Church members could seek to redress what they perceived as inappropriate disciplinary measures in their local congregations. The policy and processes prescribed were designed to fulfill the terms of Bylaw Article 8.9, viz:

*“All lay members of the Church have the right to appeal disciplinary actions, or other adverse actions or decisions, to elders designated by the Council, and for certain matters, to the Council itself, after completing the process of appeal as developed by Ministerial Services and approved by the Council of Elders.”*

In February, 2010, the Council of Elders, after a review by Ministerial Services and the Council’s Roles and Rules Committee, approved and adopted two replacement documents (attached):

“Policy for Member Appeal to the Council of Elders” and,  
“Procedure for Member Appeal to the Council of Elders”.

To meet the requirements of Article 8.9, a Member Appeal Committee (MAC) was established. As part of the review process described above, the job description of this committee was also reviewed and its scope and responsibilities are as described in this document.

### **OPERATION OF THE COMMITTEE**

The MAC operates within the terms of the two documents mentioned above and this Scope and Responsibilities document. Action prescribed in the documents is initiated when the MAC receives advice and direction from the chairman of the Ethics Committee of the Council of Elders that a member appeal has been submitted and requires determination by the MAC.

The MAC keeps all information submitted in connection with an appeal in confidence at all times during the process.

### **SPECIFIC TASKS**

1. The chairman of the MAC receives appeal documentation direct from the chairman of the Ethics Committee, noting that the work of the Committee is to be completed within sixty (60) days of the dispatch date of the documents. The chairman is required to formally acknowledge receipt of the documents in writing or by email to the Ethics Committee chairman.

The MAC chairman distributes the appeal documentation to the members of the MAC and to the alternate members and keeps the chairman of the Ethics Committee advised of the progress of the appeal, maintaining confidentiality while doing so.

2. MAC members review the appeal documentation individually and independently in order to form their own questions and judgments on the appeal. The reviewers strive to be faithful to biblical standards, ensure fairness to all involved in the appeal, and seek complete objectivity.

3. After an appropriate time the MAC chairman initiates a discussion amongst the Committee members via email, supplemented by a teleconference(s) at the discretion of the chairman.

4. The MAC may request further information from the parties involved in the appeal, and from others, if it feels additional information is required or necessary to supplement what has already been provided. The additional information is obtained in writing so that all MAC members have full and equal access. If, during the course of the appeal, conversations take place with the parties involved in the appeal, or with others, a concise written record is made and distributed to all MAC members.

5. The MAC contacts the appellant by telephone at the outset of the deliberations to give him or her confidence that he or she is being heard. If practicable, two or more MAC members meet personally with the appellant to raise questions and/or concerns relative to the appeal. This reinforces the fairness of the process in the appellant's mind. Any meeting with the appellant is a fact-finding exercise. MAC members are not there to decide on the appeal.

Prior to any meeting with the appellant, the MAC reviews the material so that questions and concerns have been identified and are addressed at the meeting. For ease of use the questions and/or concerns are consolidated into one document.

6. Consideration is given as whether the appellant has maintained appropriate confidentiality during the appeal process.

7. After the appeal material has been reviewed and the meeting with the appellant has taken place, the MAC chairman schedules a teleconference with MAC members to discuss the appeal. The Home Office assists in arranging the teleconference if such assistance is requested. If it is convenient, MAC members meet face-to-face rather than by teleconference. All relevant factors are discussed, including the wisest form of advising the outcome of the appeal to the parties involved.

### **REPORTING ON AN APPEAL**

8. If a decision is reached by a majority, the MAC chairman will coordinate the drafting of a letter to the appellant advising the outcome of the appeal and summarizing the reasons for the MAC's decision. All MAC members are given an opportunity to comment on the draft and provide input. If there is less than a majority the Committee will continue its deliberations until a required majority is reached.

9. When a final version of the letter has been agreed to by the MAC it is forwarded to the UCG/A legal counsel for opinion prior to dispatch to the appellant.

10. When the letter has been finalized the MAC chairman mails it to the appellant, with copies to the Chairman of the Council of Elders, Ministerial Services (or international equivalent) and other parties directly involved in the appeal (e.g. the pastor of the appellant).

### **MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE**

The Committee meets as and when required at the request of the chairman of the Ethics Committee of the Council of Elders, when a member appeal requires its determination. Points 3 and 7, following, provide details of meetings necessary during the appeal process.

### **MEMBERSHIP AND TENURE**

By resolution on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the Council of Elders determined that the MAC will consist of five (5) members and two (2) alternate members to be called upon if any of the regular members are unable or unwilling to act.

MAC members are chosen by the Council of Elders from amongst those elders nominated but not selected to serve on the Elder Expulsion Appeal Committee at the most recent election. A vacancy caused by the inability or unwillingness of a member or alternate member to continue to serve is filled in the same manner.

At the time these guidelines were prepared, the terms of two (2) members and one (1) alternate member expire on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011 and the terms of three (3) members and one (1) alternate member expire on 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2012. When the current terms expire, replacement members and alternate members will be appointed for four (4) year terms.

There is no provision for members and alternate members to be reappointed when their terms of office expire.

### **COMMITTEE EXPENSES**

Members of the MAC receive no compensation for their services but may be reimbursed for authorised and reasonable expenditures incurred in the course of their duties.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Policy for Member Appeal to the Council of Elders  
Procedure for Member Appeal to the Council of Elders  
Member Appeal Form

**MEMBER APPEAL**  
**To the Council of Elders**  
**United Church of God, *an International Association***

**Name of Appealing Member:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-Mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pastor's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Elder(s)' name(s) involved:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The Issue(s):**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**With whom did the issue(s) arise?**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Please clearly state what you are appealing:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**(Please turn this page over to complete the form.)**

**Have you sought resolution as explained in the Member Appeal Policy? (Explain):**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**The Results:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Please list the titles of any attached documents:**

---

---

---

---

**Please feel free to add additional pages for more space to explain any of the sections above.**

I, the undersigned, am the member who is appealing the decision or action described above or in any attachments. I have read the above and state that it is true, correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. *I agree to abide by and to accept the decision of the Council of Elders in this case.* I understand that failure to sign this statement and to make this commitment shall mean that the Council of Elders will not hear this appeal and that the decision which I am appealing will automatically become final.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Appealing Member*