



*'The Church with a difference'*

# **NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD (CATHEDRAL OF PRAISE)**

## **Communications Strategy 2011 – 2014**

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## 1.0 Introduction

The New Testament Church Of God (Cathedral of Praise), hereinafter referred to as COP, which has a senior pastor/bishop, who is supported by the Church and Pastors Council (CPC), which may consist of 5 – 10 officers. The Duties of the Church and Pastor's Council include but are not limited to the following

1. The Church and Pastor's Council, under the direction of the pastor, shall promote the general and state of outreach programs of the church.
2. The Church and Pastor's Council shall work in harmony with the pastor and assist him/her, when called upon, in the institution and direction of the local church program in the following areas:

- **Spiritual**

The Church and Pastor's Council, under the direction of the pastor, shall encourage spiritual growth of the local congregation with emphasis on personal Bible reading, prayer, family devotions, tithing and giving, Christian service and personal witnessing.

- **Financial**

The Church and Pastor's Council, under the direction of the pastor, shall approve the disbursement of church funds. (This does not include Women's Ministry monies) All major disbursements must be approved by the church conference. Each congregation shall determine what amount constitutes a major disbursement.

- **Physical**

The Church and Pastor's Council, under the direction of the Pastor, shall provide and maintain proper building facilities for the congregation and proper residence for the pastor. The council shall see that all church properties are properly insured and tax – exempt, when the secular government provides such exemptions.

### 1.1 Church Vision

The Vision of COP is: ***“Reaching people, changing lives, advancing the Kingdom of God”***.

### 1.2 Cathedral of Praise Priorities

The COP priorities which were developed as a result of consultation with the Church and Pastors Council are:

- People: Listening and responding to the needs of the congregation
- Resources: Making the best use of your money
- Improvement: Achieving very high members satisfaction through service
- Development: Of a 'can do' attitude and commitment of our staff and members
- Environment: Community impacts through joint action with others

## 2.0 Purpose of the Communication Strategy

This strategy reflects our determination to ensure a strong culture of clear, accurate and effective communication from within the Church and its wider community. We seek to find ways to involve our members and congregation in making a positive contribution to the issues that really matter to them, ensuring we make better informed decisions for the effective delivery of our services:

- Ensuring all internal and external communications are effective
- Providing successful mechanisms for two way communication
- Providing guidance to staff on methods and style of communication
- Developing a framework to enable targets to be set and the quality of communication to be measured
- Ensuring information about COP is open and accessible

## 3.0 Communication Objectives

To ensure that each group/member understands the value and commitment that Cathedral of Praise demonstrates to our congregation and the wider community.

To strengthen relationships, engage with the congregation and enhance the reputation of the church.

This strategy identifies COP current practice, future objectives and key areas of activities to be developed. The overall objectives from this are to:

- Identify methods of communication and expansion where appropriate
- Make further developments to our Internet facilities and online information
- Ensure effective communication with our members, the congregation and the wider community
- Have a sustained level of communication with our staff the National Office, the other church/churches on the district and churches in the local community
- Continue our pro-active work and good relations with the community
- Ensure that the COP corporate identity is consistent
- Ensure that best practice within communications is achieved through benchmarking with the other church/churches on the district and all stakeholders
- Provide an effective and cost effective range of communications.
- Ensure that different communication requirements of our diverse communities are identified and maintained.

## 4.0 Key Principles for all Communications

The key principles for both internal and external use are that communications at COP should be:

- Accessible
- Honest, open and accurate
- Clear, simple and user-friendly
- Informative
- Of a high quality
- Timely and current
- Impartial
- Reflect the diverse make-up of the Church and wider community

### 4.1 Accessibility

A practical guide to content, style, and availability in alternative formats is included as **Appendix A**. It is distributed to all staff for their use when writing to ensure clarity.

#### ■ Openness

- In addition to our statutory requirements, COP will ensure:
- That it is open and accessible in all its dealings whilst maintaining confidentiality as required.
- The local Presiding Bishop has a column in the monthly newsletter and is always happy to talk to members about issues concerning them.
- Appropriate names and contact details are made available on the website and in reports concerning the particular ministry
- A clear and honest report of COP activities and performance is published and widely distributed annually.

#### ■ Format

- The format of communication will be chosen with regard to cost (including both production and delivery), environmental impact and suitability for the intended audience.
- Obscure formats will be avoided. (X)HTML is preferred for both emails and information available on the internet.

- The open Portable Document Format (PDF) will be used for self contained electronic documents that are not to be edited.

It is important that COP's communications support community cohesion and are accessible to a wide range of people.

The Government issued new guidance to a number of organisations on the use of translation so that it supports the creation of stronger communities and greater inclusion. Therefore, COP will follow the 'Accessible Information Guidance', attached at Appendix 1 which sets out how COP will ensure its communications are accessible. These are based on the national guidance from the RNIB (*See it right* toolkit), Mencap (*Make it clear*) and include a set of principles for the future provision of translation.

## **5.0 Our Congregation**

COP communicates with a variety of audiences from members and supporters to staff, partners as well as the wider community (including the media). Our approach will be to try and reach all these audiences with key information as effectively and efficiently as possible.

### **5.1 Internal Audiences**

- Leadership
- Church and Pastors Council (CPC)
- COP Ministries
- Members
- COP Employees
- COP Volunteers

### **5.2 External Audiences**

- Local MP's and Councilors
- General Public
- The Press/Media
- Community and Voluntary groups
- National Office, our district and local churches
- Haringey Council
- Other churches with whom COP network

- Community Groups, Police and other External organisations (eg. Race Equality Council etc)

## 6.0 Methods of Communication

This strategy recognises the need to communicate effectively using a wide range of communications tools, to both our internal and external audiences. Our existing communications methods are listed below.

### 6.1 Internal Communications Channels

- CPC and Leadership Briefings
- Notices
- COP Website
- Monthly Newsletter
- Corporate Literature (leaflets, posters, booklets)
- DVDs
- Church Conferences (**members only**)
- Members Workshops
- Leadership Conferences
- Leadership Team Meetings
- Appraisals and One-to-Ones With the Bishop
- Education, Training and Development and Inductions
- CPC Meetings and Away Days
- Members Suggestions Incentive
- Notice boards
- Telephone
- Emails
- Directory
- Local Events
- Surveys/Questionnaires

## **6.2 External Communications Channels**

- Monthly Newsletters
- COP Website
- Facebook Social Networking Site
- Corporate Literature (leaflets, posters, booklets)
- DVDs
- The Media/Press
- Surveys/Questionnaires
- Board Minutes
- Direct Mail (postal communication)
- Telephone
- Emails
- Reception
- Public meetings
- Local Events
- Annual Reports

## **7.0 Communication with Staff**

The key principles for the COP communications strategies are:

- To keep members informed with clear up-to-date information
- To promote effective two way internal communication
- Ensure all members receive consistent messages
- Information is provided across all ministries
- Ensure an information sharing culture is developed and maintained

## **8.0 Communication with the Membership**

To provide an excellent service for our congregation by ensuring that information provided is informative, accurate and up-to-date

A range of different media and methods is used, which depend on:

- What needs to be communicated
- The audience to whom we are communicating

### **8.1 Our key communications principles are:**

- To inform members and the congregation about our services, projects and events
- Ensure that plain English is used in our documents
- Ensure two-way communication takes place
- Ensure that information is accessible, correct, relevant and up-to-date
- To provide opportunities for views to be exchanged
- To provide feedback on members' suggestions and ideas
- Endeavour to meet individual communications needs
- To communicate a range of information consistently to all stakeholders

## **9.0 Communication with the CPC**

When communicating with CPC and The Leadership Team, the key principles in place are as follows:

- Ensuring that the CPC are fully informed about current issues, news, events and activities in COP and nationally.
- Providing appropriate information to enable the CPC to approve COP strategies, dates, budgets and other crucial business decisions
- Ensuring that there is Leadership Team representation at key events and conferences
- Ensuring that confidentiality is maintained at all times

## **10.0 Communicating with Partners & Churches**

Working in partnership is crucial to COP ministries at every level. It is important that we establish and maintain strong working relationships with our partner churches.

## 11.0 Dealing with the Media (Newspaper, radio, TV, professional journals and other media)

COPs objective, when dealing with the media, is to manage and promote our key values to the wider/global community, in order to maintain and enhance the Church's profile.

- The PR Team and delegated, Ministry Heads, and CPC members should receive special training to deal with the media.
- Press releases are issued following a standardised format agreed with **the Bishop and PR Team** to ensure the local press, local radio stations and professional journals are kept informed of successes, milestones and innovations.
- A pro active relationship with the local press is being developed in order to better understand how COP can use this medium to communicate effectively with members, the national office, district church/churches, other New Testament Church Of God branches, and relevant organisations/churches within the community.
- COP is honest and takes full responsibility for its actions when dealing with the press/media.

### 11.1 Structure for handling press enquires

The Church Administrator is the first point of contact for **ALL** external enquiries, including budgets, governance issues and public events enquiries that require further interaction with the Bishop and all relevant leadership heads

### 11.2 Key future activities within this area include:

- Progressing media relationships
- Providing regular good news press releases
- Access opportunities for targeted advertising

## 12.0 COP Brand, Image and Reputation

Corporate identity, image and reputation are all part of COP's brand. Our brand is our promise that we make to all our stakeholders, and our stakeholder's perception of our brand is often based on their first impressions of the Church.

COP's logo should always be consistent and be used on all printed or public material. This is a corporate approach, and should not be departmentalised. or ministry specific.

The Church's corporate Logo and Vision Statement will be used on all COP communication material.

All COP documents (including publicity material) will be cleared with **the Bishop and Public Relations Team**, who (together with design teams where recommended) will ensure documents are produced to a high quality, and that the COP brand is strong, consistent and compliance with the Church standards.

The COP brand is unique; offering stability, consistency and reassurance in a crisis. It is also a trusted brand, and therefore it is important that people are aware of all our services, as identified by the COP brand.

The Public Relations Team will work with the CPC and all ministries within COP to enhance COP's good public image and reputation by:

### 12.1 Public Relations Activity

- Proactively identify media opportunities with regular and timely news releases for use by the local media and on the COP website
- Deal with media requests effectively to meet reporters' deadlines where possible
- Respond appropriately to any criticism made of COP in the media
- Establish and maintain protocols for media handling
- Promote the use of plain English in all COP publications

### 12.2 Image

- Develop guidelines for COP's corporate identity and ensure its appropriate use throughout COP
- Continue to develop [Name to be inserted] magazine as COP's main communication tool with its stakeholders
- Ensure the COP branding is fully used and understood throughout COP

## 13.0 SMART Targets

SMART targets are goals which eliminate confusion, and contribute to a fair, consistent and transparent management/evaluation process.. **SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound.** In order to achieve our SMART targets:-

- We will be reviewed in a positive light in local and national publications.
- All minutes of members meetings will be available to members of COP within a week of approval (in line with the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act)
- All minutes of the various ministries and CPC meetings will be available, as appropriate, within a week of approval.

- Members will indicate an awareness of COP and their rights in any surveys or questionnaires when issued
- Staff, members and volunteers will be consulted on all matters that significantly affect their situation before a major decision is made.
- Staff, members and volunteers will be informed of all major decisions through the next available publication or meeting.
- Staff, members and volunteers will be informed about their work and the association, and how this will be reflected in the results of any survey/questionnaire
- The wider community will be made aware of the work COP undertakes and the benefits this brings to the community as a whole.

## **14.0 Evaluating the Strategy**

Measuring outcomes is always difficult for communication activities and usually relate to testing changes in people's knowledge or perception. COP will encourage feedback to measure the effectiveness and success of the communication strategy. The evaluation will be an integral part of the planning process, and will take place at regular intervals throughout its implementation. Evaluation reports and recommendations will be submitted to the CPC from as and when required/requested.

## Accessibility Guide

### Content

- Use plain language
- Write short sentences, no more than 20 words long
- Use everyday words rather than jargon or abbreviations
- Use personal pronouns. For example 'we will give you the information that you need' rather than 'the landlord will provide tenants with the required information'.
- Use graphs, charts, pictures and glossaries where this makes things clearer. Include the full wording of acronyms the first time an acronym is used in a document, ie., Cathedral of Praise (COP).

### Style

- The document must be created in a way that is easy to read
- Type size should be either 12 or 14 point; electronic font size must be easily adjustable
- On paper, use the font Arial, for electronic documents use Verdana
- 'Fully justify' all texts
- Don't stretch or squash the COP logo
- Make paragraphs short and use bullet points to make it easier to read
- Put text on a plain background, not overlaid on to images

### Availability in Alternative Formats

We all want and need information, and COP works hard to make sure local people find what they need. This guidance also recognises that people have different needs, particularly:

- Children and young people
- People who are blind or have a sight impairment
- People who are deaf or hard of hearing
- People with literacy difficulties

- People with learning difficulties
- People who cannot speak or have limited understanding of English
- Through this document we set out how the Council will ensure its information is accessible and meets the new guidance issued by the Government on the use of translation
- 'All COP documents intended for the public must contain the following statement which should be in 16 point typeface if possible:  
  
'If you would like this document (leaflet) in larger print, in an alternative language, on audio, paper or in an electronic format or you would like someone to help you read it or to explain it please contact the Church Administrator of 020 8888 9427.
- These alternative languages should be included where space permits:  
(alternative community language statements to be inserted when available)
- Offer alternative methods of communication and correspond in the manner the customer wants. Telephone calls can be backed up by letters, and/or emails.

### **Consider how you are communicating**

- Are you communicating in the right way, would another form of communication be more appropriate (eg a letter, an email,-telephone call or meeting)r?
- Is all the information included relevant to the person you are writing to?
- Is the message precise and clear?

## APPENDIX 2

### Communications Strategy Action Plan 2011 - 2014

Deliverable / Objective	Target Audience	Action / Format	When / Deadline	Responsibility
<b>To inform members of our work, manage expectations and encourage two-way communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ All members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Capture data on members: preferred method of communication through a COP Skills Audit Questionnaire</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ PR Team</li> <li>■ Admin Officer</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensure public events are clearly branded</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ PR Team</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Produce a monthly newsletter – available the first Sunday of each month</li> </ul>	Quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ PR Team</li> <li>■ Admin Officer</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Review publicity</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ PR Team</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensure the COP Website is kept up-to-date with current and future activities</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ PR Team</li> <li>■ IT Consultant</li> </ul>
<b>Working with our District Partners to ensure clear branding of our services and consistent communication with the community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Members</li> <li>■ Community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Promotional work around new initiatives</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ PR Team</li> <li>■ Admin Officer</li> </ul>
<b>Engaging the community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Stakeholders</li> <li>■ Local Councilors</li> <li>■ PR Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Promotional work around good news stories</li> <li>■ Promote community projects, and church based community work</li> <li>■ Management's approach</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ PR Team</li> <li>■ Admin Officer</li> </ul>
<b>Working with the media to manage and promote COP key values and enhance our reputation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ PR Team</li> <li>■ Community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensure relevant Press Releases are prepared as necessary</li> <li>■ Ensure press enquiries are handled in a professional and effective manner</li> <li>■ Increase the use of the press to include our</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ PR Team</li> </ul>

		good news stories		
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<b>Deliverable / Objective</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>	<b>Action / Format</b>	<b>When / Deadline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Communicate COP values effectively to the congregation and community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Congregation</li> <li>■ Community</li> <li>■ Stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Produce Newsletter briefings on a monthly basis</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Bishop</li> <li>■ PR Team</li> <li>■ Admin Officer</li> </ul>
<b>Update Website to promote the Church</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Congregation</li> <li>■ Community</li> <li>■ Stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ All amendments to the COP website should be sent to the PR Team in the first instance</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ PR Team</li> <li>■ IT Consultant</li> </ul>
<b>Sign Boards to be updated</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Congregation</li> <li>■ Community</li> <li>■ Stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ All notices to be promoted on the COP notice boards should be sent to the PR Team in the first instance</li> <li>■ Removal of out-of-date notices to be done as soon as the date has passed</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ PR Team</li> <li>■ Admin Officer</li> </ul>
<b>Promoting good news Church</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ community</li> <li>■ Stakeholders</li> <li>■ Visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Any good news stories of faith to be sent to the PR Team in the first instance</li> <li>■ Ensure press releases are published in newsletter</li> <li>■ Actively promote stories/events to local/national press</li> <li>■ Involve CPC where appropriate in good news stories</li> </ul>	Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Bishop</li> <li>■ PR Team</li> <li>■ Admin Officer</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation/feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Members &amp; visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Questionnaire to ascertain what form of communication is working or not working.</li> </ul>	6 monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Bishop</li> <li>■ PR Team</li> <li>■ Admin Officer</li> </ul>