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25 November 2014

Defining Various Institutes in Affiliation with the Manichaean Church

Dear brethren in the Religion of Light, Shlama!

As mentioned in our previous letter of 24 November 2014, "Growth and Organisation of the Manichaean Church" (WOC24112014092701A-EN), we wish to assist the brethren in understanding our use of various terms for Missions, Societies, Outreaches, etc.

We define a *Mission* as an institute operated for the purpose of 1) sharing the Message of Light in a designated area and 2) distribution of literature or multi-media for teaching purposes. Although it can request assistance from fellow Manichaeans, a Mission is responsible for its own finances.

Similar to a Mission is a *Society*. It is organised specifically for the distribution of the Holy Book of Light or a collection of Scriptures from the various communities of the Religion of Light. For example, someone might wish to print and distribute a book with only Psalms in it. This could be Psalms from Manichaean, Netzarim and Atenist traditions in one cover. A Society organises the work of translating and distribution, but requests a Mission to do the actual distribution if at all possible. This allows the Society to focus on producing materials rather than distribution requirements. A Society may wish to be part of a larger "network" consisting of other Societies, such as the organisations known as the Religion of Light Bible Societies or the Manichaean Bible Society of Tibet.

An *Outreach* is any ministry that focuses on a specific assignment or missionary work that can assist others in learning more about the Message of Light in general. It is similar to a Mission, but its work is not as broad or wide spread as such. An Outreach might be established for the promotion of the Twelve Virtues, the Ten Commandments, the Five Perfections or for feeding the hungry in a particular location. With the exception of providing for the needy in a specific location near the centre of activity for the Outreach, its geographic coverage is not limited to a city, province, state or even country. The Mother Church considers the work of some scribes as an Outreach. For example, a scribe may share

the Scriptures by translating the texts into his or her own language and sharing it on a regular basis.

The phrase "*Church Bodies*" is used interchangeably with that of "Kenushta" or "Assembly". These are officially recognised institutes that have been authorised by the Mother Church. With this in mind, a Church Body is a Spiritual Community. A couple of examples include: 1) the Manichaeian Church in the East and 2) the Old Order Manichaeians. These are Church Bodies with their own administration and may include either a few congregations and individuals in different locations in the world, or they might include dozens of congregations.

Church Plants are similar to Church Bodies, but they are newly established institutes that have not yet graduated from the status of Mission or Outreach. Sometimes a Mission or Outreach might grow to an extent that it has established itself as a functioning body of believers, or various groups of believers in different locations, depending on the circumstances. In this case, they are designated as a "Church Plant." Those who were instrumental in the growth of such groups are responsible for their upkeep in spiritual matters and maturity. In time, after the Church Plant has grown to spiritual maturity, the Mother Church may grant the status of Church Body or Spiritual Community. Some examples of Church Plants include: 1) the Marga Mani Mission, 2) Church of the Holy Light, 3) Kingdom of Light Church.

On behalf of His Divine Presence and the Bitavhati Madinkha d'Maninaye,
your brothers, in sincerity,

The Manichaeian Worldwide Organisational Committee