

Bitavhati Madinkha d'Maninaye
THE MANICHAEAN WORLDWIDE ORGANISATIONAL COMMITTEE
“To Promote the Unity of the People of the Religion of Light”

Email: woc@manichaeen.org Web: www.Manichaeen.org/woc

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Regarding the Growth and Organisation of the Manichaeen Church

Due to various circumstances, including the growth of the Church in Iran and its environs, we must again review the organisational policy for the Church as a whole, beginning with the Arkhegosate or Mother Church down to the local parish. This also affords the Organisational Committee opportunity to clarify the use of certain terms as they are used by the Church in the East. We often receive questions about offices of ecclesiastical responsibility and how some of these are used in various countries. It should be noted that the Manichaeen Church in the East sets the standard for organisational policy.

We ask all the Brethren to familiarise themselves with this new outline. This letter supersedes all previously published information on the subject of organisation of the Manichaeen Church. The various missions who have printed stock of older outlines should be retired. Any references on web pages should be updated accordingly.

The Organisation of the Manichaeen Church

Arkhegosate

The Arkhegosate is often referred to as the “Mother Church” and the “Temple.” The Manichaeen Worldwide Organisational Committee is part of the Arkhegosate. The Arkhegosate is the earthly head of the Manichaeen Church and all its spiritual communities; the term “temple” is used synonymously with the phrase “Mother Church.” The Temple and the Mother Church is one and the same. The Arkhegosate is operated by the Arkhegos Mar Mani Khaila. The Arkhegosate has one primary location and two additional offices. The primary location is Tehran, Iran, while the other two are in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, and the United States.

Catholicosate

The spiritual head of a Kenushta/Spiritual Assembly is a Catholicos (plural: *catholicoi*) or Catholicos Patriarch; only the biological offspring of one of the Divine Messengers may serve in this office of responsibility. There are twelve catholicoi.

Kenushta

Kenushta is another term used for "Spiritual Community." The Aramaic term itself means "assembly" and in a broad sense, can refer to the entire assembly of believers regardless of their affiliation with a particular Spiritual Community. In the narrower sense, the term is used by Manichaeans to indicate a group of assemblies. A Catholicos serves as the spiritual head of various local assemblies affiliated with a particular Spiritual Community; a Kenushta consists of one or more Archdioceses, Dioceses and Parishes as outlined below. A Kenushta may also have its own monastic communities, scribes and scribal library (bibliotheca), along with outreaches and other ministries. The term "Kenushta" is used in TMK 9:1. Only the biological offspring of one of the Divine Messengers may serve as the spiritual head of a Kenushta.

Archdiocese

An Archdiocese consists of at least two dioceses; an Archbishop or Bishop is the earthly head of the various dioceses in his or her assigned ecclesiastical territory. There can be no more than seventy bishops serving at any one time.

Diocese

A Diocese consists of at least two parishes; the administrative earthly head of a Diocese is usually a Bishop or Presbyter.

Parish

A parish consists of two or more individuals who worship together in a single location – for example, in a church; study groups and associations of Friends are also considered parishes; Friends retain the privilege of choosing their own appropriate styles of worship. Depending on the Spiritual Community in which the local assembly is affiliated, a parish is lead by a minister or steward. A parish can also be referred to as a church, but in a broader sense the term means all those affiliated with the local assembly in the care of the minister or steward.

Missions, Outreaches, Church Bodies, Church Plants, Societies

In a future letter we will give some clarification on the subjects of missions, outreaches and church bodies, etc.

As was mentioned in a letter from April 2014, the designation of "Dabrana Patriarch" was retired. (See WOC 020414065401A-EN)

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

The Manichaean Worldwide Organisational Committee