

DELEGATE
AGENDA

Harvest **NOW**

79th INTERNATIONAL
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JULY 8-12, 2024 | INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

2024

INTERNATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL AGENDA

JULY 8-12, 2024
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

FINISH COMMITMENT
Harvest **NOW**

CHURCH OF GOD 79TH INTERNATIONAL
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



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HARVEST NOW

AGENDA

Statement of Purpose

These are unprecedented times! During the past decade, the world has experienced political upheaval, catastrophic occurrences, pandemic, significant shifts in values, exponential technological developments, massive migration, and volatile economic trends. Throughout all of the global societal contractions, the Church of God has maintained its razor-sharp focus on fulfilling the Great Commission. Together, the Church of God affirmed its doctrinal beliefs, actualized its overarching vision as a movement, assimilated and mobilized an army of ministers and leaders to march into the harvest, and aggressively accelerated our efforts to finish the Great Commission.

The International General Assembly is that organized body with full power and authority to designate the teachings, government, principles, and practices of all local churches. It is composed of all ministers and members of the Church of God, sixteen years of age and over, who are present and registered. During the Assembly, there are business sessions, elections, agenda items, exhibits, special activities, worship, and fellowship.

We gather here in Indianapolis for the 79th International General Assembly focused upon ***Harvest Now!*** As we fix our attention with intensity, let us continue to commission a global missional force as a synergistic, compelling, visional, and united cohesive body of Pentecostal believers. We acknowledge the challenge, accept the commitment, and anticipate the completion of the Great Commission Harvest—NOW!

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79TH INTERNATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTERNATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL

Schedule

1. Official Opening

2. Review of Schedule

Tuesday, July 9th

Prayer | 8:00 A.M. – 8:30 A.M.
General Council Business | 8:30 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.
General Council Business | 1:30 P.M. – 4:30 P.M.
Worship | 7:00 P.M.

Wednesday, July 10th

Prayer | 8:00 A.M. – 8:30 A.M.
General Council Business | 8:30 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.
General Council Business | 1:30 P.M. – 4:30 P.M.
Worship | 7:00 P.M.

Thursday, July 11th

Prayer | 8:00 A.M. – 8:30 A.M.
General Council Business | 8:30 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.
General Council Business | 1:30 P.M. – 4:30 P.M.
Worship | 7:00 P.M.

Friday, July 12th

Prayer | 8:00 A.M. – 8:30 A.M.
General Council Business | 8:30 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.
General *Assembly* Session | 1:30 P.M. – 4:30 P.M.
Worship | 7:00 P.M.

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3. Instructions to Delegates

4. Appointment of Committees

Ushers

Tellers

Motions

Parliamentarians

Sergeants-at-Arms

5. Nominations and Elections

6. Special Orders of the Day

Wednesday, July 10th—*Bishop J. Drew Sheard*

Thursday, July 11th—*Bishop Tim Coalter*

Friday, July 12th—*Dr. Alton Garrison*

IMPORTANT

Where any item of the Agenda makes reference to the *International General Assembly Minutes*, the reference is listed on the **left** (even-numbered) pages in a shaded box. The International Executive Council's recommendations are on the **right** (odd-numbered) pages.

Supplemental Notes and Rationale Statements briefly explaining the proposed motions are included throughout the Agenda.

1. GLOBAL HARVEST

We recommend:

That we adopt the following to be inserted in the General Assembly Minutes:

1 **GLOBAL HARVEST**

2 *We Believe . . .*

3 *That all people are created in the image of God (Gen.*
4 *1:27), that salvation through Christ is available*
5 *for all people (John 3:16), and that God desires all*
6 *people to be saved and to know Him (1 Tim. 2:4).*
7 *We believe that we are called to carry the gospel to*
8 *the entire world. Thus, we have established Church*
9 *of God World Missions to preach the gospel of Christ,*
10 *to develop mature disciples for the kingdom of God,*
11 *to lead non-Christian people to salvation, to help*
12 *unchurched Christians become committed disciples*
13 *of Christ, to train national leaders to proclaim the*
14 *gospel to their own people and to other nations, and*
15 *to help people who are suffering and in need.*

16 *We Affirm ...*

17 *Currently, the Church of God maintains a missional*
18 *presence in 191 nations and regions of the world.*
19 *Furthermore, many regions with unreached people*
20 *are not home to large Christian populations;*
21 *therefore, the Church of God will continue to expand*
22 *our regional efforts and mission. We must send*
23 *missionaries to assist in these regions. Furthermore,*
24 *Christians who live among unreached people groups*
25 *often do not have the resources to evangelize the lost*
26 *or disciple new believers. Therefore, we must provide*

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27 *resources that will assist in the evangelism and*
28 *discipleship in these unreached areas of the globe.*
29 *We affirm our care and concern for the unreached*
30 *people groups of the world. Therefore, the Church*
31 *of God will continue to expand our efforts and our*
32 *missional footprint until all have heard the gospel of*
33 *Jesus Christ.*

34 *We Commit ...*

- 35 • *To hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, who grants*
36 *to the church a passion to win the lost and who*
37 *leads the church in our missional plans and*
38 *ministries.*
- 39 • *To maximize global impact by partnering,*
40 *sharing best practices, resourcing, and otherwise*
41 *collaborating with other biblically faithful*
42 *Christian organizations in good works and*
43 *carrying the Gospel.*
- 44 • *To engage in advocating for religious freedom*
45 *around the world.*
- 46 • *To develop and support culturally relevant*
47 *educational programs and training for*
48 *international ministers and believers.*
- 49 • *To foster a missional burden, a culture of prayer,*
50 *and Pentecostal revival that will empower our*
51 *efforts to reach the lost (Eph. 6:12).*
- 52 • *To participate in initiatives and fundraising*
53 *to support our global efforts, and to identify,*
54 *encourage, and support members who feel called*
55 *to missionary work.*
- 56 • *That each local congregation be encouraged*
57 *to designate at least one Sunday annually to*
58 *celebrate, highlight, give, and promote Church of*
59 *God World Missions.*
- 60 • *That all states, nations, and regions celebrate,*

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highlight, give, and promote Church of God World Missions at an annual meeting.

- ***Finally, to carrying the Gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them how to walk as disciples of Christ (Matt. 28:19-20).***

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2. MINISTRY OF EVANGELISM

RATIONALE:

Since its birth in 1886, the Church of God movement has grown to more than 8.6 million members with a reach around the globe of approximately 191 nations and regions. Throughout its history, the thread of evangelism permeates Church of God polity alluded to in the *Statement of Vision, Scriptural Principles for Ministry, Commitments to Our Mission and Vision, Resolutions*, and more. The Church of God has witnessed compelling continual growth and revival for 138 years with a passion to realize the Great Commission through the driving force of evangelism.

During the past two decades, the operational paradigm of evangelism as a department transitioned into several autonomous ministry areas. While each of these ministry areas has been effective, this model limited ministry resources and outcomes. The future of the Church of God calls for a renewed Great Commission evangelism commitment, maximizing evangelism resources, rethinking operational paradigms, reframing structural implementation for evangelism, advancing multiplication systems, revitalization principles, and empowering evangelism for mission and vision impact.

The 79th International General Assembly has the opportunity to set the trajectory for Great Commission completion embracing the inauguration of the “Ministry of Evangelism” augmenting the Church of God evangelism mission and vision as an intensive and focused operational paradigm with elected leadership. This coordinated ministry will concentrate on the comprehensive spectrum of general evangelism strategies and initiatives, expanding evangelism resources, soul winning, personal evangelism, church planting, church health and revitalization, revivalist and evangelist ministry, and global/national connectivity—literally every facet of evangelism ministry.

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Evangelism is not just a program; it is a process, an obligation, and divine directive to fulfill the Great Commission. The command of Christ is clear: it is a mandate for the future. As a twenty-first century church with a first century message, the Church of God must affirm the commission to “go” into all the world today and every tomorrow.

S11. MINISTRY OF USA MISSIONS (73rd A., 2010)

I. USA MISSIONS BOARD

A. Selection

The USA Missions Board shall consist of not less than five members who shall be appointed biennially by the International Executive Committee (74th A., 2012).

B. Duties and Authorities

The USA Missions Board shall:

1. Serve the needs of the church as they relate to all phases of evangelism and USA missions.
2. Formulate plans and recommendations related to evangelism and church planting. Provide new and practical helps for a vigorous pursuit of a Biblical and balanced evangelistic emphasis.
3. Develop resources suitable for special fields. Offer encouragement for work among all racial and social communities of the nation.

We recommend:

- 1) **That we amend pages 79-80, S11. MINISTRY OF USA MISSIONS, by striking “~~MINISTRY OF USA MISSIONS; I. USA MISSIONS BOARD, II. RESOLUTION ON USA MISSIONS~~”, and inserting the following:**

1 ***S11. MINISTRY OF EVANGELISM***

2 ***I. Evangelism Board***

3 ***A. Selection***

4 ***The Evangelism Board shall consist of not less***
5 ***than seven members who shall be appointed***
6 ***biennially by the International Executive***
7 ***Committee.***

8 ***B. Duties and Authorities***

9 ***The Evangelism Board shall:***

- 10 ***1. Support the director of Evangelism in***
11 ***fulfillment of the mission and vision of***
12 ***evangelism ministry.***
- 13 ***2. Serve the needs of the church as they relate to***
14 ***all phases of evangelism ministry, including***
15 ***the following: personal evangelism, church***
16 ***planting, church health and revitalization,***
17 ***revivalists/evangelists, and general***
18 ***evangelism strategies and ministry.***
- 19 ***3. Strengthen the partnership with state/***
20 ***regional administrative bishops and ministry***
21 ***of Evangelism directors, evangelism task***
22 ***forces, and all areas of evangelism ministry.***
- 23 ***4. Consider and approve the annual budget of***
24 ***the ministry of Evangelism for presentation to***
25 ***the International Executive Council.***
- 26 ***5. Develop evangelism resources relevant***
27 ***for state/regional and local ministry***
28 ***opportunities.***

II. RESOLUTION ON USA MISSIONS (70th A., 2004, p. 55; 73rd A., 2010)

WHEREAS most statistical surveys list the U.S.A. as having the third largest pre-Christian population in the world; and,

WHEREAS we need to develop and implement strategies that view the U.S.A. as a mission field; and,

WHEREAS World Missions has been incredibly successful in its mission efforts and offers multiple methods by which the U.S.A. can be reached for Christ;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED That we recognize the U.S.A. as a mission field; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That the USA Missions ministry develop and deploy home missionaries and request missionaries from other ethnic and language groups from the international body who make up the Church of God; and,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED That we continue to develop means by which the ministries of World Missions and USA Missions work together in developing strategies and training workers for the world harvest.

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- 29 6. *Create initiatives for developing home*
30 *missionaries to work within unreached people*
31 *groups.*
32 7. *Recognize, encourage, and resource creative*
33 *expressions of evangelism that are currently*
34 *being implemented, as well as new innovative*
35 *ideas for evangelism.*

36 ***II. Director of Evangelism***

37 ***A. Selection, Tenure, and Salary***

38 *The office of director of Evangelism shall be*
39 *filled by one who devotes his full time to the*
40 *mission and vision of Church of God evangelism,*
41 *including all phases of evangelism ministry*
42 *with focus on the United States and Canada. He*
43 *shall be nominated by the International General*
44 *Council and elected by the International General*
45 *Assembly quadrennially (four-year term). He*
46 *shall not be eligible to succeed himself beyond*
47 *one four-year term. His salary shall be set by the*
48 *International Executive Council.*

49 ***B. Duties and Authorities***

- 50 1. *Provide guidance and direction of the*
51 *Evangelism budget.*
52 2. *Provide an annual report to the Evangelism*
53 *Board and International Executive Committee*
54 *measuring the implementation, productivity,*
55 *and effectiveness of Church of God Evangelism*
56 *Ministries.*
57 3. *Utilize and give oversight to the Church*
58 *Planting Designated Fund (Church Planting*
59 *Bank) to plant churches.*
60 4. *Design, develop, and implement an*
61 *evangelism program/strategy that gives*
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62 *priority to the following: personal evangelism,*
63 *church planting, church health and*
64 *revitalization, revivalists/evangelists, and*
65 *general evangelism strategies and ministry.*

66 ***III. Assistant Director of Evangelism***

67 ***A. Selection, Tenure, and Salary***

68 *The assistant director of Evangelism shall be*
69 *nominated by the International General Council*
70 *and elected quadrennially (four-year term) by the*
71 *International General Assembly. He shall not be*
72 *eligible to succeed himself beyond one four-year*
73 *term. His salary shall be set by the International*
74 *Executive Council.*

75 ***B. Duties and Authorities***

76 *The assistant director of Evangelism shall assist*
77 *the director of Evangelism.*

S38. STATE EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS DIRECTOR (USA MISSIONS)

(54th A., 1972, pp. 55, 56; 55th A., 1974, p. 57; 56th A., 1976, pp. 48, 49, 55; 71st A., 2006, p. 46; 73rd A., 2010; 74th A., 2012)

SELECTION

1. The state overseer may submit to the State Council the names of nominees for state Evangelism and Missions director for election prior to the International General Assembly. Ordained bishops (where practical) shall be used to fill the office.

2. The state Evangelism and Missions director's term of office shall be for two years, with a maximum of eight consecutive years in a respective non-mission state.

We recommend:

- 2) That we amend page 139, S38. STATE EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS DIRECTOR (USA MISSIONS), Selection, by striking “~~STATE EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS DIRECTOR (USA MISSIONS), Selection~~”, and inserting the following:

1 ***S38. STATE/REGIONAL EVANGELISM BOARD***

2 ***I. Selection***

3 ***1. Each state/region shall have an Evangelism***
4 ***Board.***

5 ***2. The board shall be elected by the ministers of the***
6 ***state/region.***

7 ***3. The board shall consist of not less than***
8 ***three members, who may be either ordained***
9 ***ministers or bishops. In states/regions where***
10 ***the administrative bishop and state council***
11 ***shall determine there are not enough qualified***
12 ***ministers to consider, exhorters shall be***
13 ***considered eligible to serve.***

14 ***II. Duties and Authorities***

15 ***1. The board shall meet as often as the state/***
16 ***regional Evangelism director and state/regional***
17 ***overseer deem necessary.***

18 ***2. The board shall counsel with and assist the***
19 ***state/regional overseer and state Evangelism***
20 ***director in drafting and promoting a program of***
21 ***evangelism for the local churches in each state.***

22 ***3. The board shall, with the state Evangelism***
23 ***director, partner with the ministry of Evangelism***
24 ***to train, resource, and equip local church pastors,***
25 ***ministers, and laity in evangelism.***

S39. EVANGELISM PROGRAM

That each state/region establish a Church Planting and Revitalization Task Force and Training Center for the purpose of assessing, coaching, training, and sending church planters, as well as assisting senior pastors to revitalize and grow local congregations, thereby fulfilling the vision and commitment of the Church of God (77th A., 2018).

Each state is to participate in simultaneous revival efforts during the month of October, with a membership emphasis at the conclusion of the revival [1980].

We recommend:

3) **That we amend page 139, by inserting the following:**

1 ***S39. STATE/REGIONAL EVANGELISM DIRECTOR***

2 ***I. Selection***

3 ***1. The state/regional Evangelism director shall***
4 ***be nominated by the state overseer and elected***
5 ***by the state council prior to the International***
6 ***General Assembly. The position may be full time***
7 ***with compensation or other operational options***
8 ***adopted that the state overseer and state council***
9 ***deem appropriate.***

10 ***2. Ordained bishops shall be used to fill the office***
11 ***where practical.***

12 ***3. The state/regional Evangelism director's term***
13 ***of office shall be for two years, with a maximum***
14 ***of four consecutive years in a respective non-***
15 ***mission state.***

16 ***II. Duties and Authorities***

17 ***The state/regional Evangelism director shall:***

18 ***1. Promote fulfillment of the mission and vision of***
19 ***evangelism ministry under the supervision of the***
20 ***state/regional overseer.***

21 ***2. Work in cooperation with a duly elected/***
22 ***appointed state/regional Evangelism Board in***
23 ***the development of a state/regional Evangelism***
24 ***program under the supervision of the state***
25 ***overseer as recommended by the director of***
26 ***Evangelism.***

27 ***3. Provide direction for all phases of Evangelism***
28 ***including the Church Planting and Revitalization***
29 ***Task Force in the respective state/region.***

S39. EVANGELISM PROGRAM

That each state/region establish a Church Planting and Revitalization Task Force and Training Center for the purpose of assessing, coaching, training, and sending church planters, as well as assisting senior pastors to revitalize and grow local congregations, thereby fulfilling the vision and commitment of the Church of God (77th A., 2018).

Each state is to participate in simultaneous revival efforts during the month of October, with a membership emphasis at the conclusion of the revival [1980].

30 ***4. Work in cooperation with the director of***
31 ***Evangelism with implementation of relevant***
32 ***evangelism initiatives.***

Note: Current S39 will become Item III.

S2. BYLAWS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD

(53rd A., 1970, p. 27, 28; 67th A., 1998, p. 54; 68th A., 2000, pp. 83-86)

ARTICLE VI

Governing Bodies

1. INTERNATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Elections

The International General Assembly shall elect the general overseer, the assistant general overseers, the secretary general, the director of Youth and Discipleship, the assistant director of Youth and Discipleship, the director of World Missions, and the assistant director of World Missions (58th A., 1980, pp. 29-32, (1-4; 73rd A., 2010).

S2. BYLAWS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD

(53rd A., 1970, p. 27, 28; 67th A., 1998, p. 54; 68th A., 2000, pp. 83-86)

ARTICLE VI

Governing Bodies

2. INTERNATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL

Agenda

5. The International General Council shall nominate to the International General Assembly the general overseer, the assistant general overseers, the secretary general, the general Youth and Discipleship director, the assistant general Youth and Discipleship director, the director of World Missions, and the assistant director of World Missions (73rd A., 2010 [effective 2012]).

3. DIRECTOR AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EVANGELISM

We recommend:

- 1) **That we amend page 60, S2. Bylaws of the Church of God, Article VI. Governing Bodies, 1. International General Assembly, Elections,** by inserting the words, “*the director of Evangelism*” following “the assistant director of Youth and Discipleship.”
- 2) **That we amend page 60, S2. Bylaws of the Church of God, Article VI. Governing Bodies, 1. International General Assembly, Elections,** by inserting the words, “*the assistant director of Evangelism*” preceding “the director of World Missions.”
- 3) **That we amend page 62, S2. Bylaws of the Church of God, Article VI. Governing Bodies, 2. International General Council, Agenda, 5.** by inserting the words, “*the director of Evangelism*” following “the assistant general Youth and Discipleship director.”
- 4) **That we amend page 62, S2. Bylaws of the Church of God, Article VI. Governing Bodies, 2. International General Council, Agenda, 5.** by inserting the words, “*the assistant director of Evangelism*” preceding “the director of World Missions.”

NOTE: If recommendations 1-4 are adopted, the International General Council will move immediately to provisionally nominate to the International General Assembly the director of Evangelism and the assistant director of Evangelism.

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4. BIBLICAL SEXUALITY

We recommend:

That we adopt the following to be inserted in the General Assembly Minutes.

1 ***BIBLICAL SEXUALITY***

2 ***We Believe...***

3 ***The following statement on Biblical Sexuality is a***
4 ***proclamation of the Church of God's position on the***
5 ***issues of biblical sexuality. Currently, we live in an age***
6 ***seeking to redefine humanity where sexuality, gender***
7 ***roles, and marriage are fluid, divergent between a***
8 ***culture committed to radical individuality and the***
9 ***church committed to life under the directives of Holy***
10 ***Scripture. As a Pentecostal evangelical denomination,***
11 ***the Church of God states its unequivocal position on***
12 ***issues of human and biblical sexuality predicated***
13 ***upon the Word of God and its doctrinal fidelity to the***
14 ***Declaration of Faith, doctrinal commitments, and***
15 ***relevant resolutions. This statement encapsulates a***
16 ***theological foundation addressing precepts related to***
17 ***human sexuality in accordance with biblical fidelity***
18 ***of Church of God doctrine.***

19 ***We Affirm...***

- 20 • ***That God created Adam and Eve, the first human***
21 ***beings, in His own image, equal before God as***
22 ***persons, and distinct as male and female***
23 ***(Gen. 1:27).***
- 24 • ***That a Biblical marriage is a threefold covenant***
25 ***relationship between one man, one woman,***
26 ***and one God eternally existing in three persons***

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as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We encourage Church of God members and constituents to preserve marriage as a sacred union between man and woman living lives that model commitment to the Word of God, exemplify devotion to moral purity, and celebrate family responsibility (Gen. 2:19-24).

- *That God created man and woman as complements to each other, and as a result, same-gender sexual relationships, including same-sex marriage, do not agree with God’s intention for procreation sexuality. The New Testament church clearly affirmed marriage as being a covenant relationship between a man and a woman, and of the family comprised of a father, a mother, and children (Eph. 5:21-6:4; Col. 3:18-21).*
 - *That divinely ordained differences between male and female reflect God’s creative design and give personal identity and dignity to male and female. According to a Biblical portrait, male and female are fixed bodily realities (Gen. 5:2; Matt. 19:4).*
 - *That the Church of God’s belief in God’s perfect design for human sexuality and adopting a self-conception with any sexual orientation or gender identity is contrary to God’s holy purposes in creation and redemption as revealed in Scripture. “Transgender” is an umbrella term for those whose gender expression or identity is not congruent with the sex assigned at birth. A person’s gender (male or female) is unambiguously identifiable at birth and there is no rational or compassionate reason to affirm a distorted self-concept that one’s gender identity differs from his/her creational biological gender.*
 - *That approval of homosexual marriage,*
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- 63 *polygamous and/or polyamorous relationships,*
64 *or transgenderism is sinful and such approval*
65 *constitutes an essential departure from scripture,*
66 *Christian doctrine, faithfulness, and witness*
67 *(Rom. 1:25-32).*
- 68 • *That God’s revealed will for all people is chastity*
69 *outside of marriage and fidelity within marriage;*
70 *and any affections, desires, or commitments*
71 *of copulation outside the bonds of marriage*
72 *constitute sexual immorality (Matt. 19:4-6; Mark*
73 *10:6-9).*
 - 74 • *That the Church of God subscribes to Christ’s*
75 *commandment reflecting the message of His love*
76 *for all people (John 3:16-17; Matt. 22:37-39; Mark*
77 *12:30-31).*
 - 78 • *That Church of God clergy, laity, and*
79 *congregations recognize the reality of sexual*
80 *and gender confusion as an issue that should be*
81 *treated compassionately and professionally and*
82 *take care to offer or seek competent counsel for*
83 *those who experience such confusion.*
 - 84 • *That we accept our responsibility to share*
85 *redemptive grace through Christ transforming*
86 *individuals from sexual bondage, brokenness,*
87 *and deception bringing spiritual, mental, and*
88 *emotional freedom.*

89 *We Commit...*

90 *That all Church of God leaders, ministers, teachers,*
91 *employees, and volunteers shall not be employed by*
92 *or regularly attend LGBTQIA+ affirming or affiliated*
93 *churches or religious organizations, subject to*
94 *appropriate polity action.*

S31. OFFENDING MINISTERS

I. MINISTERIAL DISCIPLINE (63rd A., 1990, pp. 70-75)

B. Trial Procedures

2. *Selection of Trial Board*

The state overseer shall appoint all trial boards.

c. The trial board should consist of not less than three (3) ordained bishops.

5. FEMALE MINISTERS ON ECCLESIASTICAL TRIAL BOARDS

RATIONALE:

Over the past several decades, the Church of God has been blessed with exponential growth in membership, including a large growth in the number of women members in our congregations, as well as a significant increase in the number of women in our ministerial ranks. Therefore, when the state overseer deems such to be prudent and appropriate for a fair trial, ordained women ministers should be included as members of ecclesiastical trial boards.

The *Minutes* do not currently allow women to serve on a trial board, often creating a lack of adequate input from a female's perspective as to insights, behavior, and perception. This lack of input may lead to less than a healthy and thoughtful decision by the trial board, especially in cases where women are involved.

We recommend:

That we amend page 123, S31. OFFENDING MINISTERS, I. Ministerial Discipline, B. Trial Procedures, 2. Selection of Trial Board, item c, by inserting:

- 1 ***“and where the state overseer deems such to be prudent***
- 2 ***and appropriate, he may also appoint not less than two***
- 3 ***(2) ordained female ministers, each with more than seven***
- 4 ***(7) years of active credentialed ministerial service in the***
- 5 ***Church of God” following “ordained bishops.”***

So as to read:

The trial board should consist of not less than three (3) ordained bishops, ***and where the state overseer deems such to be prudent and appropriate, he may also appoint not less than two (2) ordained female ministers, each with more than seven (7) years of active credentialed ministerial service in the Church of God.***

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6. GENERATIONAL HARVEST

We recommend:

That we adopt the following to be inserted in the General Assembly Minutes.

1 **GENERATIONAL HARVEST**

2 *We Believe...*

3 *That the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) is a*
4 *divine command and a defining factor in the mission*
5 *of the Church. The Great Commission compels the*
6 *church to preach the Gospel in the power of the Holy*
7 *Spirit with signs following and to make disciples*
8 *of all people. The Church of God has experienced*
9 *exponential growth, but we must remain intentional*
10 *in our witness and in our teaching. To fulfill the*
11 *command of our Lord, in light of our beliefs regarding*
12 *the eternal consequences of our actions (Declaration*
13 *of Faith, Article 14) and know the Gospel is the only*
14 *hope for the lost (Declaration of Faith, Articles 4 and*
15 *5), we must seek to gather the harvest in a manner*
16 *that engages and reaches all generations.*

17 *We Affirm...*

- 18 • *That all believers, regardless of age, are to*
19 *participate in the Great Commission and be*
20 *active in carrying the Gospel to the ends of*
21 *the earth.*
- 22 • *That we must impart a motivating love for the*
23 *lost and a passion for evangelism to the next*
24 *generation of believers.*
- 25 • *That we must encourage, enlist, empower, and*
26 *train every generation to engage in this vision.*

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- 27 • *That denominational leaders, pastors, educators,*
28 *and lay persons are to collectively engage in*
29 *finishing the Great Commission.*
30 • *That we must identify, resource, and train those*
31 *who are called and gifted in evangelism and soul*
32 *winning.*

33 *We Commit...*

34 *To actively disciple our children, youth, young*
35 *adults, middle-aged adults, and senior adults so that*
36 *they understand what it means to be a missional*
37 *Christian, a faithful disciple, a responsible part of*
38 *the church, and the purpose of Christian living. We*
39 *further commit that each pastor and leader will*
40 *promote the work of evangelism in an age-relevant*
41 *manner to those whom they lead.*

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7. DOCTRINAL FIDELITY

We recommend:

That we adopt the following to be inserted in the General Assembly Minutes.

1 ***DOCTRINAL FIDELITY***

2 ***We Believe...***

3 ***That maintaining doctrinal fidelity is essential to***
4 ***being faithful members and ministers of the Church***
5 ***of God.***

6 ***We Affirm...***

- 7 • ***That the Church of God stands for the whole Bible***
8 ***rightly divided and for the New Testament as the***
9 ***only rule of government and practice.***
- 10 • ***That the Church of God Declaration of Faith,***
11 ***Doctrinal Commitments, and Practical***
12 ***Commitments remain the definitive statements***
13 ***of our belief.***
- 14 • ***That we communicate and emphasize fidelity to***
15 ***Church of God doctrinal distinctives as stated***
16 ***in the CHURCH OF GOD BOOK OF DISCIPLINE, CHURCH***
17 ***ORDER, AND GOVERNANCE.***
- 18 • ***That we perpetuate our uncompromising doctrinal***
19 ***identity as a Pentecostal church committed to the***
20 ***manifestation of the Fruit of the Spirit in the lives***
21 ***of believers and the operation of spiritual gifts in***
22 ***the life of the church.***
- 23 • ***That we intentionally preach, teach, and proclaim***
24 ***Church of God doctrine with the Pentecostal***
25 ***distinctive of speaking in other tongues as the***
26 ***initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit***
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- 27 *and living a Spirit-empowered life.*
- 28 • *That we, the Church of God, maintain our*
- 29 *standard of holiness in stated doctrine, in*
- 30 *principles of conduct, and as a living reality in*
- 31 *our hearts.*
- 32 • *That the Church of God is a body directed by the*
- 33 *Holy Spirit, fully understanding that baptism in*
- 34 *the Holy Spirit is both a personal blessing and an*
- 35 *endowment of power for witness and service in*
- 36 *fulfilling the Great Commission.*
- 37 • *That the Church of God is a New Testament*
- 38 *church, focused on the local congregation, where*
- 39 *the pastor nurtures and leads all members to*
- 40 *exercise spiritual gifts in ministry.*
- 41 • *That the Church of God loves all people and*
- 42 *stands opposed to any action or policy that*
- 43 *discriminates against any group or individual*
- 44 *because of race, gender or nationality.*
- 45 • *That the Church of God is a movement that*
- 46 *demonstrates love and concern for the unsaved*
- 47 *through intentional evangelism, discipleship, and*
- 48 *ministry engagement.*
- 49 • *That the Church of God is Christ-centered,*
- 50 *people-oriented, and need sensitive in all its*
- 51 *programs, initiatives, and ministries.*

52 *We Commit...*

- 53 • *That all faculty of Church of God higher*
- 54 *education institutions shall continue to be*
- 55 *required to annually sign a contract that they*
- 56 *will not teach or publish content contrary to the*
- 57 *Declaration of Faith or any other established*
- 58 *doctrine of the Church of God.*
- 59 • *That all religion and theology faculty in Church*
- 60 *of God institutions of higher learning shall be*
-

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61 *credentialed Church of God ministers where*
62 *possible. Should some qualified fraternal or*
63 *laity Pentecostal scholars and/or faculty not*
64 *hold Church of God credentials, they shall*
65 *sign a statement committing to not teach or*
66 *publish anything contrary to the Declaration of*
67 *Faith or any other established doctrine of the*
68 *church. Further, should there be any question*
69 *regarding possible exemptions, they shall*
70 *be submitted to a process established by the*
71 *International Executive Committee.*

- 72 • *That all Church of God pastors and ministers be*
73 *encouraged to qualify doctrinally all ministers,*
74 *speakers, teachers, and musicians who stand*
75 *before Church of God congregations in worship*
76 *settings, or teaching environments.*
- 77 • *That all educational institutions and local*
78 *churches shall post the Declaration of Faith in*
79 *appropriate visible locations.*
- 80 • *That all Church of God local churches,*
81 *ministries, educational institutions, and*
82 *administrative offices which maintain a website*
83 *post on said website the Declaration of Faith as*
84 *an expression of Church of God doctrine.*
- 85 • *That all Church of God constituents including*
86 *administrative leaders, ministers, evangelists,*
87 *pastors, and teachers pledge their commitment to*
88 *Church of God doctrinal fidelity as stated in the*
89 *Declaration of Faith.*

S29. INSTRUCTIONS FOR MINISTERS

(68th A., 2000, p. 77; 71st A., 2006, pp. 47, 48)

I. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR MINISTERS

9. In order for any minister to be considered eligible for election or appointment by the International Executive Committee, General Council or General Assembly, the minister must be current on both personal ministerial reports and the local church reports with required finances from the church he/she pastors (if applicable). Any exceptions must be approved by the International Executive Committee. Further, this same measure applies to state/regional positions and boards. Any exception at the state/regional level must be approved by the state/regional overseer in writing (73rd A., 2010).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MINISTERS

We recommend:

That we amend page 112, S29. INSTRUCTIONS FOR MINISTERS, I. General Instructions for Ministers, 9. by inserting the following:

- 1 *In addition, that all Church of God credentialed ministers*
- 2 *shall affirm their doctrinal fidelity to the Declaration of*
- 3 *Faith as an expression of Church of God doctrine. This*
- 4 *Declaration of Faith affirmation shall be submitted*
- 5 *biennially with the September ministerial report.*

So as to read:

9. In order for any minister to be considered eligible for election or appointment by the International Executive Committee, General Council or General Assembly, the minister must be current on both personal ministerial reports and the local church reports with required finances from the church he/she pastors (if applicable).

Any exceptions must be approved by the International Executive Committee. Further, this same measure applies to state/regional positions and boards. Any exception at the state/regional level must be approved by the state/regional overseer in writing.

In addition, that all Church of God credentialed ministers shall affirm their doctrinal fidelity to the Declaration of Faith as an expression of Church of God doctrine. This Declaration of Faith affirmation shall be submitted biennially with the September ministerial report.

S32.STATE OVERSEERS (Administrative Bishops, see p. 103.) (60th A., 1984, pp. 42, 43; 73rd A., 2010, 75th A., 2014)

II. QUALIFICATIONS

6. The state overseer shall have served as the senior/lead pastor of a local church congregation for a minimum of five (5) years, or after having been elected to an International Office or Position in the Church of God. (Anyone under appointment as an Administrative Bishop, or as a Youth and Discipleship director, as of the 2018 General Assembly, shall be exempt from this requirement) (77th A., 2018).

8. QUALIFICATIONS FOR STATE OVERSEERS

RATIONALE:

It is critical to the Church of God that we affirm the calling of young ministers who feel a desire to move into administrative ministry. Often an entry level state Youth and Discipleship director position requires that the minister serve as pastor of a local congregation while also fulfilling the role of state Youth and Discipleship director for a 4-year tenure. By changing the qualification from 5 years to 4 years, it becomes more congruent with our own system. This change will allow one to gain valuable pastoral experience and also provide an opportunity for the minister to advance into the role of state overseer.

We recommend:

That we amend page 131, S32. STATE OVERSEERS, II. QUALIFICATIONS, 6., by striking “*five (5)*” and inserting “*four (4)*”.

So as to read:

The state overseer shall have served as the senior/lead pastor of a local church congregation for a minimum of *four (4)* years, or after having been elected to an International office or position in the Church of God. (Anyone under appointment as an Administrative Bishop, or as a Youth and Discipleship director, as of the 2018 General Assembly, shall be exempt from this requirement.)

S32. STATE OVERSEERS (Administrative Bishops, see p. 103.) (60th A., 1984, pp. 42, 43; 73rd A., 2010, 75th A., 2014)

VII. DUTIES AND AUTHORITIES (25th A., 1930, p. 21; 28th A., 1933, p. 43; 39th A., 1944, p. 23; 41st A., 1946, p. 26; 42nd A., 1948, pp. 28-30; 44th A., 1952, p. 35; 78th A., 2022)

11. Appoint any officer in a local church, Family Training Hour and/or YPE, Sunday school, or Women's [Discipleship] Ministries, when necessary.

9. STATE OVERSEERS—DUTIES AND AUTHORITIES

RATIONALE:

The recommendation is offered to bring the *Minutes* into conformity with current nomenclature and to eliminate the need for further modifications should new terms, names, ministries, etc., be developed.

We recommend:

That we amend page 133, S32, STATE OVERSEERS, VII. Duties and Authorities, by striking paragraph 11, and inserting the following:

- 1 *Appoint or remove any officer in a local church, when*
- 2 *necessary.*

So as to read:

11. Appoint or remove any officer in a local church, when necessary.

S22. ORDAINED BISHOP (68th A., 2000, pp. 80, 81; 71st A., 2006, p. 47)

II. QUALIFICATIONS OF ORDAINED BISHOPS

2. An applicant for ordination as bishop may be ordained when he is twenty-five (25) years of age, provided he has had at least eight (8) years of active ministry, or he has three (3) years of active ministry accompanied by a ministry-related degree or its equivalency from an accredited institution or one certified by the Church of God Division of Education, or when he is thirty (30) years of age, provided he has had at least five (5) years of active ministry, if he is otherwise qualified. In those cases in which a ministerial applicant has had verifiable active ministerial experience prior to receiving credentials, exceptions to the age qualifications can be made upon recommendation by the ministerial applicant's administrative bishop and with the approval of the Executive Council (72nd A., 2008; 76th A., 2016, pp.183-84).

10. QUALIFICATIONS OF ORDAINED BISHOPS—ACTIVE MINISTRY

RATIONALE:

The purpose of this amendment is to define the phrase “active ministry,” as it relates to the qualifications of those seeking to become Ordained Bishops.

We recommend:

That we amend page 104, S22. ORDAINED BISHOP, II. Qualifications of Ordained Bishops, item 2, by adding the following as a final parenthetical sentence:

- 1 *(For this item, “active ministry” shall be defined as the*
- 2 *number of years one has held ministerial credentials.)*

So as to read:

2. An applicant for ordination as bishop may be ordained when he is twenty-five (25) years of age, provided he has had at least eight (8) years of active ministry, or he has three (3) years of active ministry accompanied by a ministry-related degree or its equivalency from an accredited institution or one certified by the Church of God Division of Education, or when he is thirty (30) years of age, provided he has had at least five (5) years of active ministry, if he is otherwise qualified. In those cases in which a ministerial applicant has had verifiable active ministerial experience prior to receiving credentials, exceptions to the age qualifications can be made upon recommendation by the ministerial applicant’s administrative bishop and with the approval of the Executive Council. *(For this item, “active ministry” shall be defined as the number of years one has held ministerial credentials.)*

S48. MEMBERS (45th A., 1954, p. 27; 61st A., 1986, p. 54; 68th A., 2000, p. 83)

IV. REQUIREMENTS OF MEMBERS

A. Exclusion for Nonattendance

Members should be excluded from the Church of God for nonattendance of the regular services of the church of which they are members, unless they have a good reason. Notice the question is only for continued nonattendance; this doesn't mean just for a few times missing service (20th A., 1925, p. 41).

B. Stand Against Gambling

Inasmuch as the Church of God believes gambling to be contrary to Christian principle and practice; and

Inasmuch as there has been a tendency to compromise among some states and churches, teaching that state lotteries, bingo games, games of chance, and so forth, are not contrary to present Christian moral standards; therefore

The Church of God continues its stated opposition to the evils of gambling and urges its people to exhibit by precept and example its belief in the high standards of holiness conduct required of all believers (50th A., 1964, p. 55).

C. Holy Living and Modesty

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:15, 16).

“In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array” (1 Timothy 2:9).

“Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price” (1 Peter 3:3, 4) (35th A., 1940, p. 31; 66th A., 1996, p. 61).

11. RESPONSIBLE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA/ DIGITAL PLATFORMS

RATIONALE:

Throughout our history, the Church of God has always promoted a lifestyle of biblical holiness in its ministers and members, in word as well as in deed. In the digital age in which we find ourselves, the need for biblical holiness has not diminished. It may be more important now than ever.

The ever-increasing use of social media and digital platforms gives Christ's followers new venues for sharing the Good News with a lost and hurting world. Every method possible should be utilized for the spreading of the Gospel to the lost and the edification of fellow believers.

In our use of social media and digital platforms, we must always be mindful of the Savior in whose name we digitally speak. This item is intended to remind Church of God ministers and members of our mutual responsibilities to one another and to the world around us as we use these various platforms.

We recommend:

1) That we amend page 147, S48. MEMBERS, IV. Requirements of Members, by adding the following as item:

- 1 ***D. Christian Use of Social Media and Digital Platforms***
2 ***As Christ's disciples, we are to manifest His love to***
3 ***others (John 13:35). We are to make Christ known***
4 ***by both our actions and our words (1 John 3:18).***
5 ***As social media and digital platforms continue to***
6 ***grow in popularity and usage, Christians have more***
7 ***far-reaching venues for sharing the good news of***

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8 *Jesus than ever before in history. Christians should*
9 *prayerfully engage the world, using all means*
10 *available, to spread the gospel.*

11 *In using social media and digital platforms, Christians*
12 *should always speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15) and*
13 *do all things for the edification of others (Rom. 15:2).*
14 *We should always be respectful when disagreeing*
15 *with the opinions of others. We should never be harsh*
16 *nor demeaning in our words, so that our comments*
17 *become personal attacks (Phil. 2:14-15). We should*
18 *seek to use Godly wisdom so that our comments may*
19 *be described as “first pure, then peaceable, gentle,*
20 *willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without*
21 *partiality and without hypocrisy” (James 3:17).*

S29. INSTRUCTIONS FOR MINISTERS

(68th A., 2000, p. 77; 71st A., 2006, pp. 47, 48)

I. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR MINISTERS

10. Responsible Use of Social Media: Christians are exhorted by Scripture to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), to provide things honest in the sight of all persons (Romans 12:17), and to do all things for the edification of others (Romans 15:2). The use of social media by believers should conform to these and other Biblical standards (74th A., 2012).

We recommend:

2) **That we amend page 112, S29, INSTRUCTIONS FOR MINISTERS, I. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR MINISTERS, 10. Responsible Use of Social Media, by adding the following as paragraph 2:**

- 1 *As social media and digital platforms continue to*
2 *proliferate with rapid growth and utilization, Church of*
3 *God ministers should always strive to:*
- 4 *a. Uphold the doctrine of the Church of God by not*
5 *writing or commenting on anything contrary to the*
6 *accepted doctrine of the Church of God.*
- 7 *b. Remain respectful when disagreeing with the*
8 *opinion of another person, so that the discussion*
9 *of positions and opinions does not devolve into*
10 *personal attacks.*
- 11 *c. Avoid the use of harassing, abusive, or demeaning*
12 *comments about others, but reflect Christ’s love*
13 *when posting/commenting. Our posts/comments*
14 *should be “first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing*
15 *to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without*
16 *partiality and without hypocrisy” (James 3:17).*
- 17 *d. Refrain from breaching professional confidentiality*
18 *by disclosing confidential, financial,*
19 *administrative, and ecclesiastical information*
20 *presented in official meetings of local church and*
21 *pastors councils, state boards and committees, as*
22 *well as general boards and committees. Such breach*
23 *of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action.*

S29. INSTRUCTIONS FOR MINISTERS

(68th A., 2000, p. 77; 71st A., 2006, pp. 47, 48)

I. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR MINISTERS

10. Responsible Use of Social Media: Christians are exhorted by Scripture to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), to provide things honest in the sight of all persons (Romans 12:17), and to do all things for the edification of others (Romans 15:2). The use of social media by believers should conform to these and other Biblical standards (74th A., 2012).

So as to read:

10. Responsible Use of Social Media: Christians are exhorted by Scripture to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15), to provide things honest in the sight of all persons (Rom. 12:17), and to do all things for the edification of others (Rom. 15:2). The use of social media by believers should conform to these and other Biblical standards.

As social media and digital platforms continue to proliferate with rapid growth and utilization, Church of God ministers should always strive to:

- a. Uphold the doctrine of the Church of God by not writing or commenting on anything contrary to the accepted doctrine of the Church of God.***
- b. Remain respectful when disagreeing with the opinion of another person, so that the discussion of positions and opinions does not devolve into personal attacks.***
- c. Avoid the use of harassing, abusive, or demeaning comments about others, but reflect Christ's love when posting/commenting. Our posts/comments should be "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17).***
- d. Credentialed ministers are to refrain from breaching professional confidentiality by disclosing confidential, financial, administrative, and ecclesiastical information presented in official meetings of local church and pastors councils, state boards and committees, and general boards and committees. Such breach of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action.***

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12. BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

We recommend:

That we adopt the following to be inserted in the General Assembly Minutes.

1 **BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW**

2 ***We Believe...***

3 ***That the Bible is the God-breathed, proper foundation***
4 ***for the worldview of any Christian (2 Tim. 3:16).***
5 ***We believe that all areas of life including physical,***
6 ***emotional, mental, and spiritual, as well as the***
7 ***way we interact with others in our homes as family***
8 ***members (Matt. 19:19; 1 Tim. 5:8; 1 Pet. 3), in our***
9 ***communities as neighbors (Mark 12:31; Rom. 13:10;***
10 ***Gal. 6:10), and with government as citizens (Rom.***
11 ***13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17), ought to be led by the direct***
12 ***instructions and principles found in Holy Scripture.***
13 ***We also understand that throughout time and across***
14 ***cultures, many false ideologies, being humanistic,***
15 ***pagan, syncretistic, or otherwise opposed to biblical***
16 ***instruction and principles, have arisen and will***
17 ***continue to arise (2 Tim. 4:3-4; Jude 1:4). It is of***
18 ***the utmost importance that the Church of God, our***
19 ***ministers, and our members are prepared to withstand***
20 ***this onslaught of faulty worldviews and are equipped***
21 ***to proclaim, defend, believe, and follow biblical truth***
22 ***(Col. 2:8).***

23 ***We Affirm...***

24 ***The Church of God cannot ignore cultural,***
25 ***ideological, or social shifts and trends. We must***
26 ***be aware of the social issues, cultural pressures,***

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27 *or moral quandaries in this temporal world*
28 *without being consumed by or conformed to them.*
29 *We will not shrink from declaring truth in all areas*
30 *addressed by Scripture. Further, we believe that it is*
31 *our responsibility as a church to proactively prepare*
32 *our ministers and members to navigate life from a*
33 *Christian perspective and through the lens of a biblical*
34 *worldview. In all matters, it is expected that Church of*
35 *God ministers and members will live first as biblical*
36 *Christians, weighing all other ideologies, alliances,*
37 *and opinions against the truth found in Scripture and*
38 *the doctrine of the Church of God.*

39 *We Commit...*

- 40 • *To learn how “to contend earnestly for the faith*
41 *which was once for all delivered to the saints”*
42 *(Jude 1:3) so Christians can respond to and*
43 *engage the culture with the Gospel.*
- 44 • *To teach our congregations how to think biblically*
45 *and to discern the difference between a secular*
46 *and biblical worldview.*
- 47 • *To resource and equip our ministers and their*
48 *congregations to be prepared to make an*
49 *apologetic defense against objections and provide*
50 *answers for questions regarding a biblical*
51 *worldview (1 Pet. 3:15).*
- 52 • *To increase our cultural intelligence to*
53 *understand secular world views and*
54 *courageously respond correctly and respectfully*
55 *to culture.*
- 56 • *To promote that all Christians can persevere with*
57 *sound orthodoxy and cultural intelligence and*
58 *live like the sons of Issachar in ancient Israel*
59 *“who had understanding of the times, to know*
60 *what Israel ought to do” (1 Chron. 12:32).*

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13. PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

We recommend:

That we adopt the following to be inserted in the General Assembly Minutes.

1 **PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS**

2 *We Believe ...*

3 *In the priesthood of all believers, which means*
4 *that all Christians, through Jesus Christ and by the*
5 *Holy Spirit, have equal privilege and responsibility*
6 *to approach God and to serve God without the need*
7 *for another human mediator (Heb. 4:16; 1 Tim.*
8 *2:5). God’s desire and promise that His people*
9 *should be “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation”*
10 *(Ex. 19:6) is fulfilled in His creation of the Church. In*
11 *the New Testament, the word “priest” never refers*
12 *to clergy office; instead, it applies to every believer*
13 *in Jesus Christ. The Church is “a royal priesthood”*
14 *(1 Pet. 2:9), “kings and priests to His God and Father”*
15 *(Rev. 1:6). All believers are “priests of God and of*
16 *Christ” (Rev. 20:6). The fact that every believer has*
17 *access to God does not negate the value of the Church*
18 *or of the church’s leaders, because the Church is the*
19 *Body of Christ, which manifests His presence (Matt.*
20 *18:20), and because Christ Himself “gave” leaders*
21 *to the Church, who would equip all believers “for the*
22 *work of ministry” (i.e., “service,” Eph. 4:11-12).*

23 *We Affirm ...*

- 24 • *That the priesthood of all believers is an*
25 *essential doctrine and practice of the Pentecostal*
26 *movement. Pentecostalism has grown rapidly*

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27 *because the laity and the clergy have ministered*
28 *together to share the gospel of Christ and to make*
29 *disciples of all nations.*

- 30 • *That the priesthood of all believers includes both*
31 *privilege and responsibility.*
- 32 • *That the priesthood of all believers implies the*
33 *right and duty of every Christian to read the*
34 *Bible, study the Bible, and teach the Bible to*
35 *others.*
- 36 • *That the priesthood of all believers is the*
37 *doctrinal basis for the Church of God General*
38 *Assembly, in which every member in good*
39 *standing can participate in the government of the*
40 *Church.*
- 41 • *The priesthood of all believers is the basis for*
42 *preaching, prayer, intercession, the sacraments,*
43 *Christian discipleship, and for praise and*
44 *thanksgiving.*
- 45 • *That the function of priesthood implies threefold*
46 *service: to minister to the Lord (Joel 2:17; Ex.*
47 *28:1), to minister to the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:12-*
48 *16), and to minister to the world (Acts 1:8; Matt.*
49 *28:19).*
- 50 • *God has arranged the members in the body as He*
51 *chose (1 Cor. 12:18), and that various offices, roles,*
52 *and functions within the church are established*
53 *by God (Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 3:1-8; Titus 1:5-9).*
- 54 • *God directs the ministry of all members of His*
55 *church according to their spiritual gifts (1 Cor.*
56 *12:4-31).*

57 *We Commit ...*

- 58 • *To teaching this doctrine and the benefits and*
59 *responsibilities of equal access to God for all*
60 *believers while affirming biblical offices, roles, and*
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-
- 61 *functions, and demonstrating the mutual service*
62 *of believers to one another.*
- 63 • *To model our service after the example of Jesus*
64 *Christ (John 14:12).*
 - 65 • *To seek empowerment for service that comes*
66 *through the anointing of the Holy Spirit.*
 - 67 • *To fulfill the church's priestly ministries of*
68 *worship, witness, and discipleship.*
 - 69 • *To provide resources and training for clergy*
70 *and to help them equip the laity for the work of*
71 *ministry (Eph. 4:11-12).*
 - 72 • *To demonstrate unity of the body and equality*
73 *among all believers, regardless of race, gender,*
74 *age, or nationality.*

PRACTICAL COMMITMENTS

(55th A., 1974, p. 51; 56th A., 1976, pp. 55, 56; 62nd A., 1988, Journal, p. 52)

EXPLANATORY NOTES

II. ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

B. Lord's Supper (Communion) and Feet Washing

The subject of Communion and Feet Washing was considered and the Assembly decided that both are taught in the New Testament and may be engaged in at the same service or at different times at the option of the local churches. In order to preserve the unity of the body, and to obey the sacred Word, it was recommended that every member engage in these sacred services, which should be observed one or more times each year (1st A., 1906, Bk. M., p. 15; DF 12).

14. ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

RATIONALE:

The Church of God has always provided “open” ordinances for believers according to our theology, doctrine, and polity. As it reads in the *Minutes* now, participation in these ordinances is limited to “members,” excluding born-again believers under the age of 16 and/or believers who may attend regularly but are not currently members of the Church of God. The heartbeat of this motion is to broaden participation in the ordinances of the church and one’s theology of their walk with God.

We recommend:

That we amend page 32, PRACTICAL COMMITMENTS, EXPLANATORY NOTES, II. ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH, B. Lord’s Supper (Communion) and Feet Washing by inserting the words:

1 ***“and other Christian believers.”***

So as to read:

The subject of Communion and Feet Washing was considered, and the Assembly decided that both are taught in the New Testament and may be engaged in at the same service or at different times at the option of the local churches. In order to preserve the unity of the body, and to obey the sacred Word, it was recommended that every member ***and other Christian believers*** engage in these sacred services, which should be observed one or more times each year.

S30. DISORDERLY MINISTERS [MINISTERIAL DISCIPLINE]

(68th A., 2000, pp. 72-77; 71st A., 2006, pp. 47, 48; [IE Council: January 2006])

III. DISORDERLY CONDUCT

A. Explicit Heterosexual Misconduct

1. Any minister found guilty of adultery, fornication, or other sexually explicit heterosexual misconduct shall have his/her ministerial credentials suspended/revoked for a minimum period of two years. Should said minister desire reinstatement of credentials, he/she shall submit to the prescribed program of restoration through the office of the Center for Ministerial Care (75th A., 2014).

2. At the discretion of the state/territorial overseer and state/territorial council, the minister may be allowed to engage in limited, supervised ministerial activity during the second year of the disciplinary period.

3. At the conclusion of the two-year period, upon successful completion of the restoration program, and with the recommendation of the state/territorial overseer, the International Executive Council shall make a decision concerning the reinstatement of credentials and at what level. (See **S5. International Executive Council, III. Duties and Authorities**, Item 11.)

4. Any minister found guilty of sexual abuse of a child or a second offense involving adultery, fornication, or any other sexual misconduct, or any combination of these offenses, shall have his/her credentials permanently revoked. He/she must be disfellowshipped from the church. However, the opportunity for reconciliation and restoration to church membership shall be given future consideration in appropriate cases (72nd A., 2008).

15. SEXUAL ABUSE OF A CHILD/SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF A MINOR

RATIONALE:

These measures address those instances involving sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a minor by a minister or member.

We recommend:

- 1) **That we amend page 117, S30. DISORDERLY MINISTERS [MINISTERIAL DISCIPLINE], III. DISORDERLY CONDUCT, A. Explicit Heterosexual Misconduct, by adding item 5.**

1 *5. Any minister confessing to or having been convicted*
2 *of sexual abuse of a child or sexual exploitation of a*
3 *minor shall have his/her membership and credentials*
4 *permanently revoked.*

S30. DISORDERLY MINISTERS [MINISTERIAL DISCIPLINE]

(68th A., 2000, pp. 72-77; 71st A., 2006, pp. 47, 48; [IE Council: January 2006])

III. DISORDERLY CONDUCT

A. Explicit Heterosexual Misconduct

4. Any minister found guilty of sexual abuse of a child or a second offense involving adultery, fornication, or any other sexual misconduct, or any combination of these offenses, shall have his/her credentials permanently revoked. He/she must be disfellowshipped from the church. However, the opportunity for reconciliation and restoration to church membership shall be given future consideration in appropriate cases (72nd A., 2008).

We recommend:

- 2) **That we amend page 117, S30. DISORDERLY MINISTERS [MINISTERIAL DISCIPLINE], III. DISORDERLY CONDUCT, A. Explicit Heterosexual Misconduct, item 4, by striking “*sexual abuse of a child or.*”**

So as to read:

4. Any minister found guilty of a second offense involving adultery, fornication, or any other sexual misconduct, or any combination of these offenses, shall have his/her credentials permanently revoked. He/she must be disfellowshipped from the church. However, the opportunity for reconciliation and restoration to church membership shall be given future consideration in appropriate cases.

S49. MEMBERSHIP

V. PROCEDURE IN DEALING WITH MEMBER

If a member who is not a minister shall be charged with any offense which makes it necessary to deal with the member, formal charges in writing shall be given to the member not less than three days (when practical) prior to the time and place of the meeting. The member shall have a right to be heard and offer corroborating testimony at the meeting. Further, the charges shall be heard and a decision rendered by the local church and pastor's council or (if a church does not have a pastor's council or board of elders) by the members who are present at the meeting and in good standing with the church. Disciplinary options include but are not limited to: official reprimand, restitution, censure, restrictions, and, where necessary, excommunication (74th A., 2012).

In those cases in which he deems it in the best interests of the local church to do so, the state/regional overseer shall have the authority to excommunicate an unruly or uncooperative member without a formal hearing. A member disfellowshipped by a state/regional overseer shall have the right to appeal to the International Executive Committee within 10 days of the written notice of the overseer's action. The decision of the International Executive Committee is final, with no further recourse for appeal by the member. The local church must remove the member's name from the membership roll when notified of the action by the state overseer (71st A., 2006, p. 48).

We recommend:

3) **That we amend page 150, S49. MEMBERSHIP, V. PROCEDURE IN DEALING WITH MEMBER by inserting the following as the second paragraph:**

1 *Any member confessing to or having been convicted*
2 *of sexual abuse of a child or sexual exploitation of a*
3 *minor shall have his/her membership permanently*
4 *revoked from the Church of God.*

Note: Current second paragraph will become paragraph three.

S28. MINISTERIAL REPORTING

I. FORMS FOR MONTHLY REPORTING

In keeping with the financial system of the Church of God, it has been decided by the International General Assembly to furnish Report Forms upon request, in triplicate, to all ministers, for reporting to international and state headquarters on the first of each month.

II. RECORDING OF MONTHLY REPORTS

The secretary general [his office] shall maintain the following record system for all ministers' reports.

1. Each report shall be recorded monthly on an individual record and summarized annually. A copy of said annual summary shall be placed in each minister's file and a duplicate copy mailed to the minister.

2. A permanent record shall also be maintained and filed in the vault [at International Offices].

3. All reports shall be electronically filed for permanent record before being destroyed.

III. DELINQUENT REPORTING

1. When a minister becomes delinquent in reporting to international and state headquarters as much as three (3) months, he/she shall be urgently admonished by the state overseer of the state where he/she is ministering to bring his/her reports up to date.

2. Further, he/she shall be notified in writing that if he/she fails to report for a period of four (4) months, his/her license will be subject to revocation, after due disciplinary process (55th A., 1974, pp. 56, 57; 77th A., 2018).

16. MINISTERIAL REPORTING—FORMS FOR MONTHLY REPORTING

RATIONALE:

Changes to monthly ministerial reporting procedures have necessitated updates to verbiage in the General Assembly *Minutes*. Currently there is no reference to online reporting, or to exemption from reporting.

We recommend:

That we amend page 110, S28. Ministerial Reporting, by striking items I. and II. and inserting the following. (Item III would then become item II.)

- 1 ***I. Forms for Monthly Reporting***
 - 2 ***1. Every credentialed minister must report at the***
 - 3 ***first of each month regarding his/her ministerial***
 - 4 ***activity.***
 - 5 ***2. All ministers are encouraged to report online***
 - 6 ***if possible. Reports received digitally by the***
 - 7 ***International Offices shall be forwarded to the***
 - 8 ***minister's state/regional office.***
 - 9 ***3. Where online reporting creates a hardship,***
 - 10 ***ministers must request paper reporting forms.***
 - 11 ***If reporting by paper form, a copy of the monthly***
 - 12 ***report shall be sent to both the International***
 - 13 ***Offices and the minister's state/regional office by***
 - 14 ***the minister.***
 - 15 ***4. Ministers may become exempt from reporting***
 - 16 ***due to retirement from active ministry or due to***
 - 17 ***disability.***
 - 18 ***a. Requests for exemption from reporting may***
 - 19 ***be submitted by the Administrative Bishop or***
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the minister personally to the Department of Business and Records.

b. Exemption from reporting does not affect a minister's standing or ability to perform ministerial functions.

c. Ministers who return to active ministry after being exempt from reporting shall be required to resume monthly reporting.

d. Ministers who have been exempted from reporting shall notify the International Offices of any change in contact information (mailing address, email address, telephone number, etc.).

5. A permanent record of all ministers shall be maintained at the International Offices.

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17. STATEMENT ON RACISM

We recommend:

That we adopt the following to be inserted in the General Assembly Minutes.

1 **STATEMENT ON RACISM**

2 ***We Believe...***

3 ***In the value and dignity of all human beings, as created***
4 ***in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). We believe the New***
5 ***Testament teaches that in Christ there is no disparity***
6 ***of value in the human race based on religion, socio-***
7 ***economic status, or gender. (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:26-29;***
8 ***Eph. 6:8; Col. 3:8-11). Further, we believe that all of***
9 ***humanity descended from one man and one woman***
10 ***and are therefore of one race (Gen. 3:20; 1 Cor. 15:45-***
11 ***49; Acts 17:26). Additionally, redemption is provided***
12 ***for all by the same God and Savior, Jesus Christ (John***
13 ***3:16; 14:6).***

14 ***We Affirm...***

15 ***That the Church of God stands against racism in***
16 ***all forms, including prejudice, inequality, unfair***
17 ***business practices, injustice of every type, and any***
18 ***other mistreatment of individuals based upon skin***
19 ***color, ethnicity, nationality, native language, or other***
20 ***racially biased grounds. We affirm that mistreatment***
21 ***of others based on the aforementioned reasons is***
22 ***unjust, unbiblical, and sinful.***

23 ***We Commit...***

- 24 • ***To communicating the Gospel in a manner that***
25 ***celebrates the diversity of humanity and seeks to***

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be inclusive to all ethnicities.

- *To intentionally reach across denominational and congregational lines to have fellowship and collaborate in ministry with all biblically faithful Christians, regardless of ethnicity, nationality, or native language.*
- *To speak out against racism and to assist those who have been victims of racism.*
- *To teach unity in Christ within the body, encouraging interaction within the greater Kingdom of God, and within our own local churches, making it possible for anyone, regardless of skin color or ethnicity, to find a home wherever the Church of God exists.*

S2. BYLAWS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD

(53rd A., 1970, p. 27, 28; 67th A., 1998, p. 54; 68th A., 2000, pp. 83-86)

ARTICLE X

Amendment of Bylaws

Previous Notice

(2) Include the notice and a copy of the proposed change(s) to the Bylaws of the Church of God to be considered by the International General Council in at least two issues of the *Church of God Evangel* preceding the opening of the International General Council.

18. PREVIOUS NOTICE

RATIONALE:

Currently, any amendments to our Bylaws require the proposed motions to be published in two issues of the *Evangel* prior to the opening of the International General Council. As of September 2023, the *Evangel* is published quarterly, making it difficult to fulfill this requirement. This motion seeks to limit publication to at least one issue.

We recommend:

That we amend pages 64-65, S2. BYLAWS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD, ARTICLE X, Amendment of Bylaws, Previous Notice, (2), by striking the word “*two*” and inserting the word “*one*,”

So as to read:

(2) Include the notice and a copy of the proposed change(s) to the Bylaws of the Church of God to be considered by the International General Council in at least ***one*** issue of the *Church of God Evangel* preceding the opening of the International General Council.

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19. THE INSTITUTE FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

RATIONALE:

Ministerial leaders now find themselves facing questions, lifestyles, ideologies, legalities, and personal issues that no other generation has previously faced, along with a torrent of exponential and paralyzing changes. Leadership in this new era, consequently, requires not one new skill, but a collection of skills relevant to the person's specific position and context. As a Pentecostal movement of Spirit-filled believers, we must be intentional about training our ministerial leaders, as well as our laity leaders. To do so, we must provide focused leadership training systems. The development and operation of a "The Institute for Leadership Development" (ILS), is vital for the Church of God to fulfill its commitment to reach a Great Commission harvest.

1 RESOLUTION REGARDING THE INSTITUTE FOR 2 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

3 ***WHEREAS, academic studies, personal experiences, and***
4 ***professional training have shown repeatedly that***
5 ***organizations, including religious bodies, thrive***
6 ***when they have capable and well-trained leaders;***
7 ***and***

8 ***WHEREAS, many contend that at multiple levels our***
9 ***world is in the throes of a leadership crisis with an***
10 ***insufficient number of individuals qualified to lead***
11 ***successfully in the years and decades to come; and***

12 ***WHEREAS, church leaders at all levels must be trained***
13 ***not only in theological and doctrinal matters, but***
14 ***also in practical and relevant leadership skills and***

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15 *competencies; and*

16 ***WHEREAS, without hesitation, the most well-trained***
17 ***and best prepared leaders should be those managing***
18 ***and leading the Church of God, its departments, its***
19 ***agencies and related entities, and most importantly,***
20 ***its local churches; and***

21 ***WHEREAS, the Church of God values intentional***
22 ***preparation, training, and continuous life-long***
23 ***learning for its ministers, laity, and other leaders at***
24 ***every level of ministry; and***

25 ***WHEREAS, the Church of God desires to provide for and***
26 ***support practical ministerial leadership training***
27 ***and education that supports our leaders, both***
28 ***ministerial and non-ministerial church leaders,***
29 ***to deal with and overcome critical ministerial***
30 ***challenges;***

31 ***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that a “The Institute for***
32 ***Leadership Development” (ILS), be developed within***
33 ***the Church of God educational system to resource***
34 ***and implement programs globally to identify, train,***
35 ***and develop leaders, especially concentrating on***
36 ***emerging leaders, with training focused on practical***
37 ***and relevant leadership skills and competencies.***

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20. STATEMENT ON THE OLD TESTAMENT

We recommend:

That we adopt the following to be inserted in the General Assembly Minutes.

1 **STATEMENT ON THE OLD TESTAMENT**

2 ***We Believe...***

3 ***The books that we call the Old Testament continue***
4 ***to be God’s Word to the Church and to the world. The***
5 ***Old Testament is God’s self-revelation in inspired***
6 ***words that take the form of narratives, laws, history,***
7 ***songs, poetry, wisdom literature, and prophetic***
8 ***messages. The revelation provided in the Old***
9 ***Testament is true in all points, but it is an unfinished***
10 ***story. The New Testament provides the completion***
11 ***of the story of God, His creation, and His mission of***
12 ***redemption. Although the Bible was written centuries***
13 ***ago, it is not only God’s word for the past, but it is***
14 ***also God’s word for the present (1 Cor. 10:11). God***
15 ***continues to speak to us through the Old Testament,***
16 ***because “all Scripture is given by inspiration of***
17 ***God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for***
18 ***correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2***
19 ***Tim. 3:16). Thus, the Old Testament teaches sound***
20 ***doctrine, forms Christian character, and guides***
21 ***morals and behavior.***

22 ***We Affirm...***

- 23 • ***That the Old Testament Scriptures served as the***
24 ***authoritative Bible for Jesus, for the Apostles,***
25 ***and for the early church.***
- 26 • ***The unity of the Bible. The Old Testament and***

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- 27 *the New Testament are two parts of one story*
28 *(Rom. 15:4).*
- 29 • *The need for sound interpretation of Scripture,*
30 *“rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).*
 - 31 • *The priority of the New Testament in matters*
32 *of interpretation. The Old Testament must be*
33 *read in the light of the New Testament. The Old*
34 *Testament is not inaccurate, but it is incomplete*
35 *without the New Testament.*
 - 36 • *That the ultimate purpose of the Old Testament*
37 *is to lead us to salvation in Christ (2 Tim. 3:15).*
 - 38 • *That the way of salvation is the same in both*
39 *covenants—salvation is accomplished by*
40 *God’s grace and received through faith. The*
41 *Apostle Paul cites the Old Testament example of*
42 *Abraham as proof that righteousness is granted*
43 *by faith (Gen. 15:6; see also Hab. 2:4 and Heb. 11).*
 - 44 • *That the Old Testament, when properly*
45 *interpreted, is not outdated. It continues to hold*
46 *universal relevance for today.*
 - 47 • *The authority of the Old Testament. However,*
48 *certain Old Testament rituals and laws are*
49 *not binding upon Christians (Gal. 6:15; Col.*
50 *2:11). Christians are not required to observe*
51 *civil, customary, or ceremonial laws of Moses*
52 *(Acts 15:5-29), but God’s moral law embodied*
53 *in the Ten Commandments is universal and*
54 *permanent (Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:13-15; James*
55 *2:5).*
 - 56 • *That the authority of the Old Testament opposes*
57 *the moral relativism of socially constructed*
58 *morals.*

59 *We Commit...*

- 60 • *To prayerfully read and study the Old Testament*
-

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- 61 *and to hear its message through the Holy Spirit.*
- 62 • *To practice sound principles of interpretation,*
- 63 *recognizing the truth, authority, and relevance*
- 64 *of the Old Testament.*
- 65 • *To appreciate the message of the Old Testament*
- 66 *for its original context, for the New Testament*
- 67 *context, and for the Pentecostal context.*
- 68 • *To teach the foundational doctrines of the*
- 69 *Old Testament, which include the nature and*
- 70 *attributes of God, the Holy Spirit, creation, the*
- 71 *equality of all humans, the sinfulness of fallen*
- 72 *humanity, God's plan of redemption, the need*
- 73 *for faith, holiness of heart and life, covenant*
- 74 *faithfulness, love for God, love for neighbor, and*
- 75 *more.*
- 76 • *To make disciples who live in obedience to*
- 77 *God's moral law as expressed in the Ten*
- 78 *Commandments and throughout the Old*
- 79 *Testament.*
- 80 • *To preach the Old Testament Scriptures as Paul*
- 81 *instructed in 2 Tim. 4:1-4.*

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**21. REPORT-BLUEPRINT FOR
CONTINUING EDUCATION**

S9. SECRETARY GENERAL (Executive Bishop, see p. 105.)

(68th A., 2000, pp. 86, 87)

III. PROCEDURE FOR FILLING VACANCY

In the event the office of the secretary general be vacated because of death, disability, advancement, or the incumbent in any wise being disqualified, the general overseer shall submit by the most efficient and effective methods the names of the next two men receiving the highest vote, who were not elected to any general office, to the ordained bishops. The ordained bishops shall select the one who will fill the vacancy in the secretary general's office. Ballots must be returned to the general overseer within forty-five (45) days to be valid votes. The one receiving the majority vote shall be declared elected to fill the unexpired term of the secretary general (39th A., 1944, p. 38; 41st A., 1946, p. 22; [1960]; 50th A., 1964, p. 51, Item 6; 78th A., 2022).

22. SECRETARY GENERAL—PROCEDURE FOR FILLING VACANCY

RATIONALE:

This recommendation is made to facilitate a flow of leadership advancement that is both efficient and equitable. Current nomenclature does not permit the “next two men receiving the highest vote” to be considered if either of them were elected to any other general office.

We recommend:

That we amend page 78, S9. SECRETARY GENERAL, III. Procedure for Filling Vacancy, by striking the words “*who were not elected to any general office.*”

So as to read:

In the event the office of the Secretary General be vacated because of death, disability, advancement, or the incumbent in any wise being disqualified, the general overseer shall submit by the most efficient and effective methods the names of the next two men receiving the highest vote to the ordained bishops. The ordained bishops shall select the one who will fill the vacancy in the secretary general’s office. Ballots must be returned to the general overseer within forty-five (45) days to be valid votes. The one receiving the majority vote shall be declared elected to fill the unexpired term of the secretary general.

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79th INTERNATIONAL
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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