

# 2018

## International General Council Agenda

# FINISH

*in the Spirit and Power of*

# PENTECOST

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CHURCH OF GOD 77<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL  
GENERAL  ASSEMBLY

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# 77<sup>th</sup> International General Council FINISH Commitment Agenda

## Statement of Purpose

The FINISH Commitment is a global church focus on the Great Commission fulfillment. It is predicated on the acronym FINISH (Find, Intercede, Network, Invest, Send, and Harvest), including qualitative declarations constructed on Scripture and quantitative goals contextualizing how we are engaging the Great Commission.

As the Church of God looks to the future, it depends on our willingness to evaluate our past, examine our present, and be intentionally focused as we move forward. It is about how we see our future in the context of the Great Commission of Jesus in Matthew 24:14 when He declared, *“The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world...and then shall the end come”* (NKJV). Our commitment is to be engaged as part of Christ’s body and FINISH the Great Commission.

One of the most significant gatherings of the Church of God is the International General Assembly. It is that organized body with full power and authority to designate the teaching, government, principles, and practices of all the local churches around the world. During the Assembly, there is normative business that includes elections, business sessions that deal with agenda items, worship and fellowship. Often, business is typically refinement of policies and procedures, polity issues, and frequently identified as operational items. While these are important and necessary for the systemic process of the church, these types of agenda items may isolate the core values and visional commitments necessary to be a relevant church.

The 77<sup>th</sup> General Assembly agenda is different. It is conceived and contextualized on the declared Mission and Vision of the

Church of God. The purpose of the FINISH Commitment Agenda is to articulate the vision predicated upon six primary areas delineated as resolutions. These include the following: Visional Actualization, Doctrinal Affirmation, Structural Acclimation, Ministerial Activation, Generational Assimilation, and Spiritual Acceleration. Every agenda item is categorized under one of these visional resolutions.

Some of these agenda items will simply require renewed affirmation, while others will require strategic amendment prior to significant adoption. This visional agenda will depend upon prayer, study, discussion, and intentional focus from a harvest perspective witnessing the FINISH realization of the Great Commission. The FINISH Commitment Agenda is about the mission, vision and mandate being certain that we, the Church of God, are on course as a distinctive Pentecostal movement.

# FINISH

*in the Spirit and Power of*

# PENTECOST

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CHURCH OF GOD 77<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL  
GENERAL  ASSEMBLY

# **77th International General Assembly**

## ***International General Council Agenda***

### **1. Official Opening**

### **2. Review of Schedule**

#### **Tuesday, July 31**

##### ***General Council Business***

8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

#### **Wednesday, August 1**

##### ***General Council Prayer***

8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

##### ***General Council Business***

8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

#### **Thursday, August 2**

##### ***General Council Prayer***

8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

##### ***General Council Business***

8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

#### **Friday, August 3**

##### ***General Council Prayer***

8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

##### ***General Council Business***

8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

##### ***International General Assembly Business Session***

1:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

### **3. Instructions to Delegates**

### **4. Appointment of Committees**

Ushers

Motions

Tellers

Parliamentarians

Sergeants-at-Arms

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## **5. FINISH Commitment**

*The Mission, Vision, and Mandate*

Dr. Timothy M. Hill, General Overseer

## **6. Elections**

Council of Eighteen

## **7. Special Orders of the Day**

### **FINISH Commitment Contextualization**

- Wednesday, August 1  
8:45-9:15 a.m.      FINISH Commitment:  
Your Personal Ministry  
Journey  
*Mark Rutland*
- Thursday, August 2  
8:45-9:15 a.m.      FINISH Commitment:  
Urban Transformation  
*Bruce Deel*
- Friday, August 3  
8:45-9:15 a.m.      FINISH Commitment:  
Agenda for National Revival  
*Samuel Rodriguez*

## **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.**



# 77<sup>th</sup> International General Council FINISH Commitment Agenda

## I. RESOLUTION: VISIONAL ACTUALIZATION

### **RATIONALE:**

The governing documents of the Church of God clearly set out our core values in regard to fulfilling our mission and vision as a body of believers. However, so as to refocus our attention to the priorities and purpose of our commitment to fulfill and FINISH the Great Commission, the following resolution is offered as an opportunity for the International General Council to speak as an affirming and endorsing voice to this aspect of the mission and vision of the Church of God.

*WHEREAS, we have been challenged with the vision to FINISH the Great Commission; and*

*WHEREAS, the accomplishment of this task will require the concerted effort and resources of the body of Christ; and*

*WHEREAS, this task will necessitate us to reimagine, retool, and revise methods, strategies, and programs to be effective, efficient, and relevant;*

*BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the general overseer, in consultation with the other members of the Executive Committee, appoint a Task Force on Visional Actualization, that is representative of the church (to include ministers and laity, men and women, and be ethnically diverse); and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Task Force specifically focus on the following areas and prepare recommendations for the Executive Council to consider for implementation and, as necessary, inclusion on the International General Council agenda for 2020:*

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- a. *Evaluation of the departments and ministries of the International Offices to determine the value added to local churches and to develop an instrument for state/regional offices to evaluate the value their programs and ministries are adding to the local church;*
  - b. *Assessment of the budget of the International Offices to determine the funding priorities supporting the core values of the church and finishing the Great Commission;*
  - c. *Review of the systems (including elections and appointments) and programs of the church considering multinational and multigenerational culture, including language-specific resources, cultural variants, etc.;*
  - d. *Appraisal of the church planting and church revitalization efforts and funding with a goal to enlarge and enhance the effectiveness of these priorities;*
  - e. *Analysis of the need for and promotion of ministerial recruitment, development, and placement in the Western USA, and other areas;*
  - f. *Refine, expand, and promote the current affiliation and amalgamation opportunities and procedures;*
  - g. *Devise policy guidelines for multisite campuses; and*
- BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that a report of this Task Force's work be prepared and made available to the 2020 International General Council.*



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## **II. Actualization of a Global Context of Ministry**

### **RATIONALE:**

The Church of God identifies itself as an international church in its scope, operation, and ministry (page 45, *International General Assembly Minutes* of the 76<sup>th</sup> International General Assembly). For this to be more than just words, we must practically contextualize this concept. The gifts of the Spirit and their operation in the church are not limited by national boundaries or cultural distinctions and neither should our ministries.

This motion seeks to task the International Executive Council with the responsibility of actualizing a global context of ministry. First, since the Council has international representatives, this Council is uniquely qualified to discuss and to address the needs and challenges of the international community. Second, the Council controls and sets the budget parameters for the varying departments and ministries of the church. Third, the Council has the authority to direct the church's ministries to intentionally design their resources and ministries with a global context in mind.

We recommend:

**That we amend page 69, S5. International Executive Council, III. Duties and Authorities, by adding the following as item 15:**

*15. The International Executive Council is tasked with the responsibility of actualizing a global context of ministry to include, but not limited to, enhancing the availability of language-specific resources; recognition and utilization of international leaders during general church events, refining programs, methods, and systems to reflect the international nature of the church; and challenging the church to think globally.*

**S39. EVANGELISM PROGRAM**

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].

### **III. Church Planting and Revitalization Task Force**

#### **RATIONALE:**

The development of a Church Planting and Revitalization Task Force, and Church Planting and Revitalization Training Center in each state/region, will become a catalyst throughout the Church of God facilitating greater gospel multiplication by developing systems that increase capacity, advance effectiveness for communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ, and inspire church planting and revitalization in close proximity to the harvest. In addition to the development and implementation of a state/regional task force, establishing a Church Planting and Revitalization Training Center in each state/region can provide training, equipping, and revitalization of pastors with needed resources to bring greater church health, systems and growth in existing churches (Ephesians 4:11-12).

We recommend:

**That we amend page 132, S39. EVANGELISM PROGRAM, by inserting the following as the first paragraph:**

*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.*

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#### IV. RESOLUTION: DOCTRINAL AFFIRMATION

##### **RATIONALE:**

The governing documents of the Church of God clearly set out our core values in regard to fulfilling our mission and vision as a body of believers. However, so as to refocus our attention to the priorities and purpose of our commitment to fulfill and FINISH the Great Commission, the following resolution is offered as an opportunity for the International General Council to speak as an affirming and endorsing voice to this aspect of the mission and vision of the Church of God.

*WHEREAS, the Church of God globally stands for the whole Bible rightly divided, and for the New Testament as the only rule of faith and practice; and*

*WHEREAS, the Declaration of Faith and Doctrinal Commitments remain the definitive statements of our beliefs; and*

*WHEREAS, we are living in a world that is constantly changing, and the calls to adapt our beliefs to prevailing societal norms or personal experiences are becoming more frequent;*

*BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that we reaffirm our commitment to our core beliefs and values as stated in the latest edition of the International General Assembly Minutes; and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we intentionally teach and proclaim our belief in the Pentecostal distinctive of speaking in other tongues as the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and living a Spirit-empowered life; and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that our ministers prayerfully reaffirm their commitment to and belief in these doctrinal statements; and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we continually seek to address current social issues in love, considering Biblical standards and not prevailing societal views; and*

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*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that to ensure generational continuity, we instruct our youth in these doctrinal beliefs;  
and  
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that this resolution be placed in the Minutes following the Doctrinal Commitments.*



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## V. RESOLUTION: STRUCTURAL ACCLIMATION

### **RATIONALE:**

The governing documents of the Church of God clearly set out our core values in regard to fulfilling our mission and vision as a body of believers. However, so as to refocus our attention to the priorities and purpose of our commitment to fulfill and FINISH the Great Commission, the following resolution is offered as an opportunity for the International General Council to speak as an affirming and endorsing voice to this aspect of the mission and vision of the Church of God.

*WHEREAS, while the Church of God has a structure with certain distinctives to our movement that has served us well throughout our history, at times it is necessary to refocus, retool, and recalibrate to accelerate our harvest goals; and*

*WHEREAS, the ministries of our movement have been supported by the tithing and giving of our faithful constituents; and*

*WHEREAS, throughout our history our ministers and churches have reported the progress of their ministry to their respective offices; and*

*WHEREAS, there is a need for elections and appointments to reflect the multicultural diversity of our movement; and*

*WHEREAS, enhanced preparation and effectiveness of state/regional leaders will provide more effective ministry and administrative success so that focused appointments can provide for greater missional impact;*

*THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this 77<sup>th</sup> International General Council give attention to consistency in tithing and reporting by ministers and churches; and*

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*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that careful consideration be made of our voting and appointment processes to assure that they reflect our multicultural diversity and enhance our missional impact; and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that consideration be given to the State Youth and Discipleship Director's length of tenure; and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a Task Force be appointed to study considerations for greater global missional impact in the Church of God; and*

*BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that we consider the measures presented to this 77th International General Council for key and critical matters associated with structural acclimation with a sense of Kingdom urgency so our movement can accelerate our harvest goals spiritually, missionally, and administratively in order to FINISH the Great Commission.*



## **S2. BYLAWS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD**

### **ARTICLE VI Governing Bodies**

#### **3. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

##### **Authority**

This council shall consider and act upon any and all matters pertaining to the general interest and welfare of the Church of God.

##### **Members**

The general overseer, his assistants, the secretary general, and eighteen councilors [the Council of Eighteen] elected by the International General Council shall constitute the International Executive Council of the church



## VI. International Executive Council-Bylaw

### **RATIONALE:**

In 1986, the International Executive Council was increased from 12 to 18 members. Membership in the USA and Canada was 546,728 and worldwide 1,652,089 with churches in 109 countries. Today, USA and Canada membership is 1,189,304 and worldwide 7,468,083 with churches in 185 countries.

The number of elected members of the International Executive Council has remained constant for the past 32 years while membership has increased by 5,815,994 members.

Considering the substantial growth of the Church and subsequently a broadened opportunity for greater representation, it is proposed that the number of International Executive Council members be increased from 18 to 24 members, in addition to the International Executive Committee which also serves by virtue of their office.

The saving of time and resources is paramount in a decision of this nature. If implemented, a representationally increased council by necessity will implement intentional focused scheduling, communication and fiscal prioritizing to effectively minimize added expenses.

Further, that the International General Council give equitable consideration in the selection process for ethnic and generational representation on the International Executive Council.

### **Notes:**

[It is understood that if adopted any reference to “eighteen (18) members” in **S2. BYLAWS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD**, or in any other section of the International General Assembly *Minutes* shall be amended to “twenty-four (24) members” or the “Council of Twenty-four” where appropriate. Also, if adopted, this change to the Bylaws shall be effective following the 77<sup>th</sup> International General Assembly]

## **S2. BYLAWS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD**

### **ARTICLE VI. Governing Bodies**

#### **3. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

##### **Authority**

This council shall consider and act upon any and all matters pertaining to the general interest and welfare of the Church of God.

##### **Members**

The general overseer, his assistants, the secretary general, and eighteen councilors [the Council of Eighteen] elected by the International General Council shall constitute the International Executive Council of the church.

## **S5. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

### **I. SELECTION**

1. The general overseer, his assistants, the secretary general, and eighteen councilors [the Council of Eighteen] constitute the International Executive Council of the church.

2. The International Executive Council is comprised of the International Executive Committee and eighteen (18) elected members. Not less than nine (9) members shall be pastors at the time of their election. Further, two (2) members of the Council of Eighteen shall be at the time of their election foreign nationals residing and ministering outside the United States (69th A., 2002, p. 50). No member of the International Executive Committee who has just completed his tenure of office shall be eligible to serve on the International Executive Council for the ensuing International General Assembly term.

We recommend:

- A. That we amend page 61, S2. BYLAWS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD, ARTICLE VI., Governing Bodies, 3. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, Members— by deleting the words— *eighteen councilors [the Council of Eighteen]* and replace with—*twenty-four councilors [the Council of Twenty-four]*.**

So as to read:

The general overseer, his assistants, the secretary general, and *twenty-four* councilors *[the Council of Twenty-four]* elected by the International General Council shall constitute the International Executive Council of the church.

**Note:**

[It is understood that should agenda item “A.” fail to be adopted, agenda item “B.” and “C.” will not be considered.]

We recommend:

- B. That we amend page 66, S5. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, I. SELECTION, Item 2 by deleting *nine (9)* and inserting *fourteen (14)***

So as to read:

The International Executive Council is comprised of the International Executive Committee and eighteen (18) elected members. Not less than *fourteen (14)* shall be pastors at the time of their election.

**Note:**

[It is understood that should agenda item “A.” fail to be adopted, agenda item “B.” will not be considered.]

## **S5. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

### **I. SELECTION**

1. The general overseer, his assistants, the secretary general, and eighteen councilors [the Council of Eighteen] constitute the International Executive Council of the church.

2. The International Executive Council is comprised of the International Executive Committee and eighteen (18) elected members. Not less than nine (9) members shall be pastors at the time of their election. Further, two (2) members of the Council of Eighteen shall be at the time of their election foreign nationals residing and ministering outside the United States (69th A., 2002, p. 50). No member of the International Executive Committee who has just completed his tenure of office shall be eligible to serve on the International Executive Council for the ensuing International General Assembly term.

We recommend:

**C. That we amend page 66, S5. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, I. SELECTION, Item 2 by deleting ~~two (2)~~ and inserting **three (3)****

So as to read:

Further, **three (3)** members of the Council of Eighteen shall be at the time of their election foreign nationals residing and ministering outside the United States.

**Note:**

[It is understood that should agenda item "A." fail to be adopted, agenda item "C." will not be considered.]

## **S5. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

### **III. DUTIES AND AUTHORITIES**

8. The general overseer, with the International Executive Council, shall give one of his assistants the World Missions portfolio and assign his duties and authorities (52nd A., 1968, p. 34).

## VII. International Executive Council and General Overseer Duties

### RATIONALE:

Church of God World Missions is a vital component of everything that the church does in fulfilling and finishing the Great Commission. However, no other provision of the Minutes mandates that a specific portfolio be assigned to a member of the International Executive Committee.

We recommend:

- A. That page 68, S5. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, III. Duties and Authorities, Item 8, be amended by striking the word "~~shall~~" and inserting the words "*be authorized to*."

So as to read:

The general overseer, with the International Executive Council, *be authorized to* give one of his assistants the World Missions portfolio and assign his duties and authorities.

We recommend:

- B. That page 73, S7. GENERAL OVERSEER, II. Duties and Authorities, Item 5, be amended by inserting the words "*be authorized to*" before the word "give."

So as to read:

Together with the International Executive Council, *be authorized to* give one of his assistants the World Missions portfolio and assign his duties and authorities

## **S37. STATE YOUTH AND DISCIPLESHIP DIRECTOR**

(54th A., 1972, pp. 42, 43, 44; 55th A., 1974, p. 53; 56th A., 1976, pp. 48, 49, 55; 69th A., 2002, p. 50; 71st A., 2006, p. 46; 73rd A., 2010)

### **I. SELECTION**

1. The state Youth and Discipleship director shall be nominated by the state overseer and elected by the State Council prior to the International General Assembly.
2. The state Youth and Discipleship director's term of office shall be for two years, with a maximum of eight consecutive years in a respective non-mission state.
3. Credentialed ministers (where practical) shall be used to fill the office.



## VIII. Tenure of State Youth and Discipleship Director: Part 1

### RATIONALE:

Historically, State Youth and Discipleship Directors were appointed to two-year terms and were allowed to succeed themselves, for a total tenure of four years in a non-mission state. Effective in 2008, the tenure was extended, allowing a state director to serve a maximum of eight consecutive years in a respective non-mission state.

This tenure adjustment will maximize the engagement of the next generation of state directors, promote relevant vision, and strengthen ministry development.

### Note:

[This measure, if adopted, would apply to any director with four years of service in any non-mission state/region as of the 2020 Assembly.]

We recommend:

**That page 132, S37. STATE YOUTH AND DISCIPLESHIP DIRECTOR, I. Selection, Item 2 be amended by striking "*eight*" and inserting "*four*"**

So as to read:

The state Youth and Discipleship director's term of office shall be for two years with a maximum of **four** consecutive years in a respective non-mission state. [Effective 2020 General Assembly]

## **S37. STATE YOUTH AND DISCIPLESHIP DIRECTOR**

(54th A., 1972, pp. 42, 43, 44; 55th A., 1974, p. 53; 56th A., 1976, pp. 48, 49, 55; 69th A., 2002, p. 50; 71st A., 2006, p. 46; 73rd A., 2010)

### **I. SELECTION**

1. The state Youth and Discipleship director shall be nominated by the state overseer and elected by the State Council prior to the International General Assembly.
2. The state Youth and Discipleship director's term of office shall be for two years, with a maximum of eight consecutive years in a respective non-mission state.
3. Credentialed ministers (where practical) shall be used to fill the office.

## **IX. Tenure of State Youth and Discipleship Director: Part 2**

### **RATIONALE:**

Historically, State Youth and Discipleship Directors were appointed to two-year terms and were allowed to succeed themselves for a total tenure of four years in a non-mission state. Effective in 2008, the tenure was extended, allowing a state director to serve a maximum of eight consecutive years in any one non-mission state. Currently, there is no cumulative maximum length of service for state directors.

This tenure adjustment will maximize the engagement of the next generation of state directors, promote relevant vision, and strengthen ministry development.

In order to provide consistency of tenure limitation, this measure would support the total uninterrupted tenure of a State Youth and Discipleship Director to 16 years in non-mission states.

**Note:** [This measure, if adopted, would apply to any State Youth and Discipleship Director who has accumulated 16 years of service in non-mission states as of the 2022 Assembly.]

We recommend:

**That page 132, S37. STATE YOUTH AND DISCIPLESHIP DIRECTOR, I. Selection, Item 2 be amended by adding “*and with a maximum of 16 years in non-mission states.*”**

So as to read:

The state Youth and Discipleship director’s term of office shall be for two years with a maximum of eight consecutive years in a respective non-mission state, ***and with a maximum of 16 years in non-mission states. (Effective 2022 General Assembly).***

**Note:** [It is understood that should agenda item VIII be adopted, the above measure will be edited to comply to that measure.]

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## **X. Election and Appointment Process Study Commission**

### **RATIONALE:**

The Church of God has as its foundation a commitment to the New Testament as our only rule for government and discipline. (*Church of God General Assembly Minutes*, 2016, p. 20) As the church leadership in Antioch was comprised of individuals from various cultures (Acts 11:19-26), so too is the Church of God. As such, intentional effort should be made to recognize those of all cultures whom the Lord has raised up as leaders and to involve them at all possible levels.

We recommend:

*That a Study Commission be appointed to review the election and appointment process, including reflection of multicultural diversity with recommendations to the International Executive Council for implementation of, and as necessary, inclusion on the 2020 International General Council agenda.*

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## XI. RESOLUTION: MINISTERIAL ACTIVATION

### RATIONALE:

The governing documents of the Church of God clearly set out our core values in regard to fulfilling our mission and vision as a body of believers. However, so as to refocus our attention to the priorities and purpose of our commitment to fulfill and FINISH the Great Commission, the following resolution is offered as an opportunity for the International General Council to speak as an affirming and endorsing voice to this aspect of the mission and vision of the Church of God.

*WHEREAS, ministers are called of God for “equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12); and*

*WHEREAS, the times demand that our ministers be prepared academically, emotionally, and professionally to adequately tend to the needs of our constituency and finish the Great Commission; and*

*WHEREAS, the ministry is rewarding, yet extremely stressful because of the attacks both from inside and outside the church; and*

*WHEREAS, the church’s health is dependent upon the health and well-being of the minister;*

*BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the general overseer, in consultation with the International Executive Committee, appoint a Task Force on Ministerial Activation, that is representative of the church (to include ministers and laity, men and women, and be ethnically diverse); and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Task Force specifically focus on the following areas and prepare recommendations for the International Executive Council to consider for implementation or, as necessary, inclusion on the International General Council agenda for 2020:*

- *Enhancement of the well-being of ministers and the procedures for the rehabilitation and reinstatement of ministers;*

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- *Harmonization of standards relative to applicants for ministry, reflecting the international nature of the church; and*
- *Enhancement of the credentialing process; and*

*BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that a report of this Task Force work be prepared and made available to the 2020 International General Council.*



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## **XII. General Requirements of Applicants for Ministry**

### **RATIONALE:**

This motion seeks to change the current process of credentialing for exhorters and ordained ministers outside the United States and Canada to allow for a stronger sense of identity with the national Church of God where they will serve. The introductory level of credentialing could be expedited by empowering the field director to sign credentials after being recommended by the regional superintendent and national overseer following appropriate screening and testing, without compromising the integrity of the process.

Allowing the tests for the first two levels of ministry to be changed to reflect the history and polity of the particular nation/region of a candidate would help to strengthen the ministerial candidate's sense of identity and understanding of the church in their nation/region.

Testing for the third level (ordained bishop) would remain unchanged, because all leaders with access to the International General Council and eligible for appointment or election need a broader knowledge of the church's history and polity on the international level.

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We recommend:

**That we amend page 95, S21. APPLICANTS FOR MINISTRY, IV. General Requirements of Applicants for Ministry, by adding the following as item 7:**

*7. International Exceptions. The following exceptions to the established ministerial credentialing process apply only to countries outside the United States and Canada:*

- a. That the first two levels of credentials be issued by the field director's office, upon recommendation of the regional superintendent and national overseer following appropriate screening and testing;*
- b. That the history and polity sections of the examination for the first two ranks of ministry be redesigned to include an overview of the history and polity of the Church of God internationally and a more detailed review of the national church history and polity where the examination is administered; and*
- c. The Ordained Bishop Examination would remain unchanged.*

**MOTION: 76TH INTERNATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL/ASSEMBLY, 2016**

*After a detailed review by the International Executive Council of the meaning and usage of the term "bishop," further study needs to be done that will better address whether it is necessary to change the current nomenclature in order to clarify and fulfill the intent of the International General Council with respect to the designation of the ministerial rank in the Church of God. We also recommend that the study include a detailed look at the title of "ordained bishop" and any effect it has on the legal and cultural issues of the International Church and on the IRS rulings concerning the national church. Further, that the following issues and relatedness of these issues be part of this report:*

- 1. Titles for all Ranks of Ministry*
- 2. Qualifications of Ministry*
- 3. Women in Ministry*

*That this study be brought back to the 2018 International General Council.*

### **XIII. Meaning and Usage of the Term “Bishop”**

#### **RATIONALE:**

The “Further Study” was assigned the responsibility to address the need to change current nomenclature in order to clarify the intent of the International General Council with respect to the designation of the ministerial rank (bishop) in the Church of God; and also address the relatedness of three issues, including the following: (1) titles for all ranks of ministry, (2) qualifications of ministry, and (3) women in ministry.

After comprehensive review of the research, information, and data of the “Further Study” as mandated by the International General Council for presentation to the 2018 International General Assembly, and the repeated calls for study and further study for more than a decade, the following recommendation is submitted for consideration:

#### **Note:**

[A copy of the Further Study Report of the Meaning and Usage of the Term “Bishop” is included in your registration material.]

We recommend:

*That open Ministry Forums be conducted globally to provide opportunity for deliberate and meaningful discussion, dialogue, questions/ answers and time for spiritual insight regarding the importance and understanding of ministry ranks, qualifications, and women in ministry with attention upon the meaning and usage of the title “bishop.” Following the forums, appropriate motion(s) be formulated by the International Executive Council specifically addressing the stated issues and brought to the 2020 International General Council.*

## **S32. STATE OVERSEERS (Administrative Bishops, see p. 101.)**

**(60th A., 1984, pp. 42, 43; 73rd A., 2010, 75th A., 2014)**

### **I. SELECTION**

1. State overseers shall be appointed by the International Executive Committee, and a rating instrument shall be designed to indicate the state overseers' performance, and this rating sheet shall substitute for the preference ballot as the primary source of information.

Also, that a place be provided on the rating sheet for the individual's preference for state overseer. Only performance sheets with state overseer preferences that are returned will be counted in the reappointment of state overseers.

2. That the opportunity to participate in the State Administrative Bishop Preference/Evaluation voting process be restricted to those credentialed ministers who are current with their personal ministerial reports to both their State/Regional Office and the International Offices. In addition, those ministers who have been appointed as a pastor of a local church must also be current, or in covenant agreement, with their state/region and international monthly church reports, including appropriate monies, beginning at the time of their appointment, in order to participate in the process.



## **XIV. Tithing and Reporting Consistency**

### **RATIONALE:**

For various reasons, some Church of God credentialed ministers find themselves attending and financially supporting churches other than a local Church of God congregation. While not seeking to create a hardship for these ministers, it is felt that only those who are actively supporting a local Church of God congregation with their attendance and tithe should be given the right to express a vote/evaluation on a state/regional overseer.

The reasoning is twofold. First, this measure protects the integrity of the vote of the actively engaged minister. The credentialed minister's vote is not diluted by that of someone who is not attending or tithing in a local Church of God congregation. Second, this measure ensures the state/regional overseer vote/evaluation reflects the opinion of those who are most aware of his leadership.

We recommend:

**That we amend page 124, S32. STATE OVERSEER, I. Selection, by adding the following as item 3:**

*3. Further, that all credentialed ministers be active in both tithing and attendance in a local Church of God congregation within the state/region in which the vote/evaluation is conducted.*

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## **XV. Lee/PTS Ministerial Scholarship**

### **RATIONALE:**

The Church of God faces a shortage of available manpower in the Western regions, as well as in other mission states/regions. Coupled with these pressing needs are the escalating costs of higher education, often linked to student debt which the future minister incurs in the pursuit of advanced training. The stress of this debt often precludes those who feel called to minister in these underserved areas from effective service.

We feel the creation of a ministerial scholarship, tied to Lee University and the Pentecostal Theological Seminary and based upon the number of years served, will assist both the student and the region by creating an opportunity for effective leadership by those who have engaged in preparation for ministry.

We recommend:

*That a study commission be formed for the purpose of exploring a possible scholarship fund for Lee University and Pentecostal Theological Seminary students who pledge to serve as pastors or church planters in the Western USA and other areas of the United States. That the findings be brought back to the International Executive Council for consideration and possible inclusion on the 2020 International General Council agenda.*

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## **XVI. Ministerial Position Criminal Background Checks**

### **RATIONALE:**

In 2004, the Church of God mandated that “All applicants for the ministry, including those advancing in rank, must give consent to the state/regional office to conduct criminal background checks” (See S21 IV. 6., page 95—2016 *Minutes*). Since that time, background checks for all persons in certain categories, such as those working with children and youth, have become a required part of ministry qualification.

Given the accessibility, expectation, and prevalence of criminal background checks in today’s business and legal communities, it is deemed helpful and necessary to expand this concept to all persons placed, appointed, or hired in local church congregation positions. While this might create possible cost concerns for churches or individuals involved, the benefits of conducting such background checks far outweigh any factors otherwise.

We recommend:

**That we amend page 108, S29. INSTRUCTIONS FOR MINISTERS, I. General Instructions for Ministers, by adding the following as item 11:**

*11. Any person placed/appointed/hired for a ministry position in a local congregation of the Church of God should have a criminal background check.*

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## **XVII. Pastoral Placement**

### **RATIONALE:**

Policies and procedures for placing pastors are varied depending on the location, size of the church, and the administrative bishop. There are four parties involved in the appointment process. First, it is important that God is involved in the process. Second, the administrative bishop must be willing to appoint a particular person to the church. Third, the members who support the church with their attendance and tithes deserve input into the pastoral selection, and finally the candidate must be willing to become the pastor. If all four parties agree on the same candidate, then a successful pastoral placement can occur. Some churches want the administrative bishop to just appoint a pastor, while other churches insist on having candidates and choosing from among them.

The evaluation of a pastor's performance once involved a preference expression by the members taken once every four years. However, that requirement has been removed, and now there is no formal evaluation of a pastor's performance that is required. It is prudent that we review the process of placing and evaluating pastors to determine the most appropriate procedures.

We recommend:

*That a Study Commission on Pastoral Placement be appointed to review the process and procedures of pastoral appointments and evaluation with recommendations presented to the International Executive Council for implementation or, as necessary, inclusion on the 2020 International General Council agenda.*

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## **XVIII. Pastoral Sabbatical**

### **RATIONALE:**

In affirmation of the 2016 General Council action, the International Executive Council duly reviewed the “Pastoral Sabbatical” motion and such is brought back to the 2018 International General Council agenda for consideration.

We recommend:

**That we amend page 173, S68, COMPENSATION FOR PASTORS, by adding the following as VII. Pastoral Sabbatical:**

So as to read:

### *VII. Pastoral Sabbatical*

*We recommend that pastors take a sabbatical for purposes of personal spiritual renewal and marriage/family strengthening. Furthermore, that said recommended sabbatical is taken upon completion of five-(5) consecutive years of pastoral ministry and continue throughout the pastor’s ministry career on a 5 (five) year schedule. Five (5) years of pastoral ministry shall not be limited to the tenure of the present location where a pastor is serving.*

*We recommend that said sabbatical be of thirty (30) days in length, and include total cessation of ministry roles and responsibilities for the full sabbatical period. The timeline of a sabbatical shall be planned in advance—the pastor working with the local church leadership and calendar, so necessary preparations can be made for continued ministry during the sabbatical.*

*The state/regional overseer and district overseer are to be informed in advance of the sabbatical, and provided with dates involved, and information concerning ministry/leadership roles during the sabbatical period. The local church where the pastor is serving shall continue full compensation during the sabbatical period.*

## **S32. STATE OVERSEERS (Administrative Bishops, see p. 101.)**

**(60th A., 1984, pp. 42, 43; 73rd A., 2010, 75th A., 2014)**

### **II. QUALIFICATIONS**

The office of state overseer is an honored and vital position in the Church of God (Acts 20:28). It is therefore fitting that the person who serves in this capacity be a person of strong spiritual authority and able to demonstrate capable leadership qualities, such as

1. The ability to oversee persons as well as programs (Acts 20:28).
2. An attitude of submission to those over him in the Lord (Hebrews 13:7).
3. Leadership qualities to motivate and delegate responsibilities for efficient operation (1 Corinthians 16:1; 1 Timothy 1:18, 19; 5:1, 2).
4. Sensitivity to those whom he serves by exemplifying compassion, trustworthiness, concern, and integrity (Hebrews 6:10; 1 Timothy 1:18, 19; 4:12, 13; 6:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 2 Corinthians 4:1-3; 6:3-12a).
5. Adaptability to the cultural differences and changing role of church ministry (Acts 6:1-7; 2 Timothy 4:1, 2).

## **XIX. State Overseer Qualifications**

### **RATIONALE:**

The position of state overseer is one which requires knowledge of the day-to-day work of the local pastor. By having accrued at least five years of active service as a senior pastor, the prospective state overseer will possess a first-hand understanding of the task of the local pastor, as well as the ongoing operation and challenges of the local church.

The exception in the case of those elected to international positions recognizes the wisdom of the body at large when the investment of trust is made in an individual. Likewise, the exception granted the International Executive Committee recognizes the knowledge and wisdom vested in those tasked with selecting leaders.

We recommend:

**That page 124, S32. STATE OVERSEERS, II. Qualifications—  
be amended by adding the following as item 6:**

*6. Have served as the senior/lead pastor of a local church congregation for a minimum of five years or after having been elected to an international position. Any exceptions can be made by the International Executive Committee.*

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## **XX. State Overseer Qualifications—Leadership Development**

### **RATIONALE:**

The dynamics of leadership are constantly evolving, and state overseers are called upon to provide leadership in various situations. By being involved in on-going leadership development settings, those serving as state overseers will be better equipped to provide insightful leadership methods. The International Executive Committee has a broad grasp of the varying leadership needs of both the state overseer and the state/region being served and is best suited to determine the specific areas of need in each situation.

We recommend:

**That page 125, S32. STATE OVERSEERS, be amended by inserting the following as VI. Continuing Leadership Development (Current Item VI. Duties and Authorities becomes Item VII. Duties and Authorities)**

*VI. Continuing Leadership Development  
Overseers actively participate in continuing leadership development and training courses as planned, directed, and implemented by the International Executive Committee.*

## **S43. DISTRICT OVERSEERS**

### **I. SELECTION**

Each district shall be under the care and supervision of a district overseer, appointed by the state overseer.

### **II. DUTIES AND AUTHORITIES**

The district overseer shall:

1. Conduct conferences in each of the churches on his district. However, he may authorize the local pastor to conduct the conference (65th A., 1994, Item 7, p. 88).
2. See that a general evangelistic effort is put forth in his district during the year.
3. See that the state program is carried out in the churches of his district.
4. Assist the state overseer in the appointment of pastors, when called upon to do so.
5. Together with the state overseer, pass on the selection, purchase, and construction of all church properties on his district.

## **XXI. District Overseers**

### **RATIONALE:**

The opportunity for greater gospel communication and ministry productivity through further developing healthy systems at the district level throughout the Church of God and among churches on each district is potentially the convergence of unity and contextual awareness accomplishing a best-practices approach to advancing the gospel.

The rationale for the adoption of this measure is winning the lost and making disciples through church planting and revitalization.

Items 6 and 7 encourage the collaborative efforts of churches to work together to revitalize churches on the district and establish a goal for church planting.

We recommend:

**That we amend page 134, S43. DISTRICT OVERSEERS, II. Duties and Authorities by adding the following as items 6 and 7:**

- 6. Annually, each district identifies and participates in a church revitalization project within the district (where feasible).*
- 7. Each district be encouraged to establish a goal for church planting every two years in partnership with the state office.*

## **S24. EXHORTER**

### **I. QUALIFICATIONS OF EXHORTERS**

### **II. RIGHTS AND AUTHORITIES**

The exhorter shall have full right and authority to

1. Preach and defend the gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. Serve as evangelist.
3. Serve as pastor of a church.
4. In cases of emergency the exhorter may be authorized by the state overseer to baptize converts and receive believers into fellowship of church membership (47th A., 1958, pp. 28, 29).
5. When an exhorter is serving as pastor, and where state laws recognize the credential of an exhorter as those of a duly authorized minister of the gospel, the exhorter may solemnize the rites of matrimony (54th A., 1972, p. 46).
6. Exhorters who are serving as helpers and assistants may receive tithes when available (21st A., 1926, p. 32).
7. The exhorter must be active in the ministry, and shall be required to pay tithes [into the local church where his or her membership is located] and to make monthly reports to the state overseer and to the secretary general. The exhorter may be promoted to the rank of ordained minister when deemed qualified by the state overseer and others concerned (42nd A., 1948, p. 27).



## **XXII. Exhorter**

### **RATIONALE:**

The words “in cases of emergency” are not necessary since authorization for the described ministry functions may be authorized by the state overseer.

We recommend:

**That we amend page 103, S24. EXHORTER, II. Rights and Authorities, 4, by deleting the words— ~~“In cases of emergency”~~**

So as to read:

The exhorter may be authorized by the state overseer to baptize converts and receive believers into fellowship of church membership (47th A., 1958, pp. 28, 29).

## **XXIII. Exhorter**

### **RATIONALE:**

This measure was originally passed in 1926 and is no longer consistent with our present operating structure.

We recommend:

**That we delete on page 103, S24. EXHORTER, II. Rights and Authorities, 6.**

~~*6. Exhorters who are serving as helpers and assistants may receive tithes when available (21st A., 1926, p. 32).*~~

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## XXIV. RESOLUTION: GENERATIONAL ASSIMILATION

### RATIONALE:

An aging ministry needs the vigor of the next generation. An upcoming generation of ministry needs the wisdom gained from the experience of the preceding generation. In an effort to foster a uniting spirit such as that which bonded Elijah and Elisha (2 Kings 3:11), the expression of gratitude for that which has been done must be united with an expression of anticipation for that which is to be. As Aquilla and Priscilla engaged Apollos (Acts 18:26) and blended their expanded knowledge of the gospel with the zeal and eloquence of the younger orator, resulting in a powerful and public declaration of Jesus, so the Church of God must find points of connection whereby the various generations can effectively blend their gifts into a powerful demonstration of Pentecostal proclamation of Jesus Christ.

*WHEREAS, the ministry pool of the Church of God has continued to age in the past few decades; and*

*WHEREAS, these aging ministers have contributed greatly to the establishment and advancement of the ministries of the Church of God; and*

*WHEREAS, a Caleb Generation of ministers has much to offer a new generation of God-called, Spirit-filled ministers by mentoring, advising, and guiding the younger generation; and*

*WHEREAS, a new generation of young ministers—the Jeremiah Generation—stands ready to march into the harvest with a decided determination to FINISH the Great Commission in their generation; and*

*WHEREAS, the Church of God must provide opportunities for upward mobility of potential leaders at all levels of ministry and administration; and*

*WHEREAS, there is an expressed need for assimilation of the generations into a dynamic, Spirit-empowered force to go into the harvest and FINISH the Great Commission; and*

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*WHEREAS, a need exists for greater cooperation in ministry by both older and younger generations so that we may complete the task assigned to us by our Lord in His Great Commission to the Church in Matthew 28:19-20;*

*THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the International Executive Council of the Church of God implement ways and means to provide meaningful recognition and affirmation of aging ministers; and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we embrace the Jeremiah Generation of emerging ministers in meaningful ways that will mobilize this army of younger ministers; and*

*BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that we consider practical actions for the assimilation of generations into a viable spiritual force for the work of the ministry and for the advancement of the gospel, so the Church of God may FINISH the Great Commission.*



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## **XXV. Ministry Life Planning**

### **RATIONALE:**

This item is a resolution of practical action derived from the resolution on Generational Assimilation.

We recommend:

**That page 127, S32. STATE OVERSEER, VI. Duties and Authorities, Item 22, be added so as to read:**

*22. That each state/regional office conduct an annual Ministry Life Planning Training event covering the issues and challenges of retirement planning, ministerial retirement transition, ministerial taxes, healthcare, and whole life health, assisting ministers of every age to approach the stages of life successfully and to embrace the aging of ministry.*

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## **XXVI. Engaging the “Jeremiah Generation”**

### **RATIONALE:**

For the Church of God to continue as a vibrant and thriving church, committed to fulfilling and to FINISH the Great Commission, it is important that we identify, engage, mentor, and train young men and women to take on leadership roles within the local church and the denomination. This effort must be intentional and focused on reaching this group of leaders that have been designated as the “Jeremiah Generation.” These young leaders should be encouraged to engage and participate in camp meetings, prayer conferences, Winterfest, youth camps, mission trips, and a host of other local and denominational ministries.

We recommend:

**That we amend page 127, S32, STATE OVERSEERS, VI. Duties and Authorities by adding the following as item 23:**

*23. That each State/Regional Overseer in cooperation with the State/Regional Youth and Discipleship Director, lead pastors, student pastors, and the perspective state/regional Ministerial Development Board (CAMS and MIP) adopt an annual plan for identifying, mentoring/training, and engaging young men and women designated as the “Jeremiah Generation” in both local and state/regional ministry of the Church of God.*

### **NOTE:**

[It is understood that should agenda item XXV fail to be adopted, this item would be added as paragraph 22 on page 127, S32, STATE OVERSEERS, VI. Duties and Authorities.]

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## **XXVII. Generational Task Force**

### **RATIONALE:**

This item is a practical action derived from the resolution on Generational Assimilation.

We recommend:

*The establishment of a Generational Task Force designed to identify and embrace the differing requirements of generational ministry. The Generational Task Force is to be appointed by the International Executive Committee and is to meet at least yearly to provide input to the International Executive Committee regarding the needs of the various generations.*

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## **XXVIII. Aging of Ministry Task Force**

### **RATIONALE:**

This item is a practical action derived from the resolution on Generational Assimilation.

We recommend:

*That a Task Force be appointed to study the aging of ministry in the Church of God and ways and means to provide meaningful recognition and affirmation of aging ministers with recommendations to the International Executive Council for implementation of, or as necessary, inclusion on the 2020 International General Council agenda.*

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## XXIX. RESOLUTION: SPIRITUAL ACCELERATION

### RATIONALE:

The governing documents of the Church of God clearly set out our core values in regard to fulfilling our mission and vision as a body of believers. However, so as to refocus our attention to the priorities and purpose of our commitment to fulfill and FINISH the Great Commission, the following resolution is offered as an opportunity for the International General Council to speak as an affirming and endorsing voice to this aspect of the mission and vision of the Church of God.

*WHEREAS, from our humble beginning, we have been a movement characterized by our insistence upon the authority of God's Word; and*

*WHEREAS, our firm stand on scriptural authority has led us to our fundamental statement that we accept the whole Bible, rightly divided, and the New Testament as our only rule for discipline and government; and*

*WHEREAS, we, as a movement, have delineated our basic beliefs in the document known as the Church of God Declaration of Faith; and*

*WHEREAS, we, as with other religious organizations, now face great and complex challenges to our historic faith; and,*

*WHEREAS, the Church of God sees itself as a divine work of the Holy Spirit, a vital part of a spiritual movement called to help usher in revival and bring renewal to a spiritually hungry world; and*

*WHEREAS, we have pledged our movement to FINISH, in this generation, the Great Commission given to the Church by our Lord in Matthew 28:19-20;*

*THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this 77<sup>th</sup> International General Council of the Church of God diligently seeks to implement ways and means to foster renewed dedication and commitment to the core values of the Church of God as outlined in the Minutes of the International General Assembly; and*

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*BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that we consider appointing a Task Force to study and review the “Commitments to the Core Values of the Church of God” so that we may retain our unique position as one of the leading Pentecostal churches in the world.*



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### **XXX. Core Values—Commitments to Our Mission and Vision**

**RATIONALE:**

It is imperative that the church remain true to these core values and seek ways to renew our Commitments to our Mission and Vision.

We recommend:

*That a Task Force be appointed to study ways to renew our commitment to our Mission and Vision Statement with recommendations to the International Executive Council for implementation or, if necessary, inclusion on the 2020 International General Council agenda.*

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