

2010

**REPORT OF THE
BYLAWS AND STRUCTURE/
USA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE**



**Church of God
73rd International General Assembly
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Orlando, Florida**

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USA National Assembly
Committee**

The bylaws of the Church of God appear in S.2, pp.53-59 of the International General Assembly Minutes and are comprised of ten articles that relate to the internal organization and corporate structure of the International Church. These include the corporate name of the Church and its temporal nature as a not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation. The governance and mission of the Church are identified as well as those who comprise its membership. The International General Assembly, General Council and Executive Council are established as governing bodies with the International Executive Committee serving as the Executive Board. Authority is given for the appointment of standing boards and committees along with the election of three department leaders and their associates. Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised is cited as parliamentary authority. The power to amend, alter or appeal the bylaws are vested in the International General Assembly and must meet the requirements of previous notice and a two-thirds majority vote from both the International General Council and the International General Assembly.

From time to time various components of the bylaws have been reviewed and/or amended to ensure their relevancy and provide greater efficiency in prosecuting the mission of the church. These include motions addressing the manner of selection of department leaders (election vs. appointment); frequency of meetings; membership composition of various governing bodies; the insertion of a mission statement and the defining of what constitutes previous notice.

In 2008 the International General Assembly again called for a review of the bylaws and structure of the Church of God and recommendations as to how they can be modified to engage the missional mandate and facilitate the growing needs of a 21st

Century Church. It also requested a study to identify bylaws and governance for a USA National Assembly. Given the degree of overlap of these two assignments the International Executive Council voted to merge both study commissions. Further, to more missionally align the Church and adjust to a new financial environment, authorization was given by the Council to the International Executive Committee to initiate changes to the organizational structure and personnel within the guidelines of the existing Minutes of the International General Assembly Minutes. Questions

Guiding the bylaws and structure committee were these questions:

1. What organizational structure would best facilitate, resource and mobilize the 32,000 churches in the Church of God to fulfill the Great Commission?
2. What current bylaws, polity or procedures seem to impede the progress, growth and expansion of the Church of God?

Methodology

To fulfill its assignment the committee reviewed transcripts and departmental evaluations from those attending the listening tours conducted by the International Executive Committee and researched the historical development of the current bylaws and administrative/organizational structural design of the Church of God. Attention was given to previous studies conducted on reorganization as well as other denominational structures. Additionally, the Committee received referral recommendations from the International Executive Council for review and consideration. From these an exhaustive review was conducted of previous reports.

Assumptions

The committee was further guided by the following assump-

tions:

1. The organizational structure should reflect our theology, mission and core values.
2. The organizational structure should unify vision, align ministry initiatives, decrease competition for resources, provide for accountability and eliminate administrative duplication.
3. The organizational structure should reflect 21st century trends toward globalization, diversity, flexibility and interdependence.
4. The organizational structure should modernize its nomenclature and transition from a pyramid (top-down) paradigm to a collaborative consortium centered around the Great Commission.

Observations

In keeping with its assignment the committee observed the following:

1. Though aligned divisionally, much of the organization still operates departmentally, especially in terms of budgeting and fundraising.
2. The present organizational structure has been greatly impacted by the inefficiencies of the placement process.
3. The bylaws do not include a purpose statement for the General Assembly, which could bring greater definition to the kind of business that comes before the Assembly and improve the quality of our deliberation.
4. The International General Assembly Minutes only itemize a few ministries/departments, therefore providing the International Executive Committee and Council discretion over the many departments not named.

Areas for Further Study

Given the breadth and complexity of the assignment the committee believes further study needs to be made of the following

issues related to bylaws and structure:

1. *Bicameral System* – Is our bicameral system the best way of processing General Assembly business or should we consider transitioning to a delegate Assembly comprised of ministers and laity?
2. *Governing Bodies* – Is the present composition of our governing bodies adequate to represent the international, multicultural and multi-generational constituency of the Church at large?
3. *Property Deeds* – Does our current polity concerning property ownership through a Church of God Warranty Deed create strength and protection for local churches or does it create an unnecessary chain of liability for the church at large and discourage other churches from uniting with our ranks that otherwise would be inclined to do so?
4. *Elected vs. Appointed Leadership Positions* - Should we continue to elect some leadership positions and appoint others?
5. *Structure and Personnel of State/Regions* – Should our state/regional office personnel be reconfigured to provide for specialists who could assist local churches in such as family ministries, children’s ministry, evangelism, care, counseling, etc.?
6. *USA National Assembly* – What are the unique challenges in the USA that call for a National Assembly and have they changed since the proposal was first introduced? How does this proposal reflect the history and tradition of the Church of God and how does it define what we wish to become? How would this proposal affect a unified polity for the church and what impact will it have on the local church?

The Executive Council and the Executive Committee will continue to review these items and will bring to the General Council any recommendations deemed necessary.

