

# **CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF CHURCH OF GOD, MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL**

## **PREAMBLE --OPENING**

We the people of the Church of God, Ministries International, in order to; "...Go ye therefore into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15), "... and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:..."(Mat. 28:18-20); and furthermore , Jesus Christ commanded Peter, "Feed my Sheep" (John 21:16,17), "...Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." (I Peter 5:2,3), do ordain and establish this CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD, MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL.

## **COVENANT**

We recognize that the spiritual organism is the Body of Christ, which is the Church of God, "...For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. "And, "...Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." ( I Cor 12: 13,14, 27).

Whereas, we, members of the Body of Christ, and members in particular, COVENANT before GOD, and with EACH OTHER, to:

- (1) Strive to live by every WORD of God, being examples to our brethren and our fellow citizens in the world; (Mat. 4:4)
- (2) Dedicate ourselves to the task of fulfilling the TWO GREAT COMMISSIONS God gave to His Church;
- (3) Live peaceably with all men (Rom 12: 18);
- (4) Be prepared to forgive one another, even as God has forgiven each one of us; (Mat. 6:14,15)
- (5) Earnestly strive to maintain the "faith once delivered to the Saints" (Jude 3)

**ARTICLE 1**  
**Non profit corporation status.**

The Church of God, Ministries International is a legal body which shall operate as a non profit corporation. Established in order to operate under the laws that govern our country, and the states in which our churches operate.

**ARTICLE 2**  
**The Board of Directors**

SECTION 1 Responsibilities of the Board

(A) The Board of Directors accepts as its responsibility to oversee the distribution of the Church Finances, and will be responsible for having an annual audit and publishing the auditor's report to the Body, the Church.

(B) This corporation is a non-profit church, and is not formed for the pecuniary gain or profit of its Directors, Officers, Ministers or Members. No dividend shall be paid and no part of the income of this corporation shall be distributed to its Directors or Officers, Ministers, Members, or Associates, excepting that reasonable compensation in the form of salaries or reimbursement shall be paid to administrative officials of the corporation or reimbursements and/or salaries paid to ordained ministers of the church for services rendered. All salaries and benefits must be approved by the Board. No bonuses shall be paid to any Director, Officer, Minister or Member, and no Officer, Minister, Member or Employee of the church may borrow from the corporation at any time.

(C) In the event of dissolution of this corporation, after all debts and obligations are satisfied, no portion of the assets or financial instruments of any kind shall accrue to the personal benefit of any Director, Officer, Minister, Employee or Member. In the event of dissolution, any assets or financial instruments shall be transferred to a Church with identical goals and purposes. So long as, the Church has been approved as a Tax-Exempt organization under appropriate Federal (Internal Revenue) Statutes and State Law, And whereas, no member of the Board of the Church of God, Ministries International is affiliated with said Church.

(D) The Board of Directors will have no ecclesiastical authority over the Church of God, Ministries International, except to perform its responsibility pursuant to point (A) above. Instead, the MINISTRY of the Church of God, Ministries International, will oversee the Churches Ecclesiastical matters pursuant to Holy Scripture. (Mat. 16:18-19) (Mat. 18 19-20) (I Cor. 12:28) (Eph. 4:12).

(E) Removal from the Board: The Ministry may at any time vote to remove a member of the Board if they have determined he is not properly fulfilling his responsibilities, as defined herein.

Such removal will occur only after a majority vote by the entire ministry at a meeting convened to address this issue. Such board member cannot participate in the vote

1. The remaining directors may by majority vote fill any vacancy on the board for an unexpired term, providing that the voting members have the right to fill the vacancy at any special meeting called for that purpose prior to such action by the board.

## SECTION 2 Election of Board Members

(A) The Board of Directors officers shall consist of namely the President, Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, and other Board members as defined in Article 2: Section 2 Paragraph F.

(B) Candidates for Board membership shall be selected from among the ministry in good standing. Recommendations may be received from the ministry, hosts, or lay members before the term of a Board member expires. No person shall be appointed to the Board who is not compatible with the Beliefs, Doctrines, Goals and Objectives of the Church of God, Ministries International.

(C) Some or all recommended candidates for the Board shall be elected by a majority vote of the ministry of the church. In the case that there are more than the allowable number of ministers nominated for the board, the top five to eleven ministers receiving the most votes (from the voting members of the church), shall be selected to the Board.

(D) The President will serve as chairman to preside over all regular and special meetings of the Board. He will report to the ministry and to the membership updates on the state of the work as needed, and the annual report as required in Article 2, Section 1, Paragraph A

(E) In the event the President is sick, dies, or is unable to fulfill his responsibilities, the Vice-President will fill the position until a replacement can be made. A special meeting by the Board will be conducted for the purpose of replacing the President.

(F) The Board shall consist of a minimum of five members, and a maximum of eleven members who are ordained ministers of the church.

(G) The Board of Directors shall meet at a minimum of once annually

(H) Board members shall serve for one year terms but may serve successive terms.

## **ARTICLE 3** **The Church**

The Church of God, Ministries International recognizes it does not represent the body of Jesus Christ in its entirety, but is a part of the larger body, the spiritual organism of believers (I Cor.

12:12-14) who have associated themselves together in a legal corporation to accomplish a specific mission as set forth in this Constitution and in these By-Laws.

## **ARTICLE 4**

### **The Mission of the Church**

SECTION I The PRIMARY MISSION of this church shall be to fulfill the TWO-PART COMMISSION of Christ given to His apostles, and incumbent upon EVERY GENERATION of HIS CHURCH TO:

- (A.) "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15), and
- (B) "...Feed my Sheep" (John 21:16)

SECTION 2 Further, the church shall establish churches and establish a Ministry:

(A) ESTABLISH CHURCHES: Raise up local churches of converted, baptized believers as God adds to His church through His calling as expressed by Christ Himself Who said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mat. 11:28) and Who said to His disciples, "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35), and Who inspired Luke to write, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47)

(B) ESTABLISH A MINISTRY: Ordain elders (PASTORS, MINISTERS), deacons, and deaconesses who are qualified pursuant to I Tim 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; to feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. (I Peter 5: 2-3).

(1) Recommendations for the ministry should be in writing by the members and the ministry, and sent to the Area Coordinator to be forwarded to the ministry at large for consideration. Recommendations should include a brief biography of the individual, how long he has been in the church, experience in serving the church, past affiliations, family status, current job or career. As God states, he should not be a novice, lest he be lifted up.

(2) No individual minister may ordain any one without submitting the individual's name first to the Area Coordinator and receive approval by a majority of the entire ministry.

(3) The originating Ministers of this corporation are: Bruce Chapman, Ian Hufton, Thomas D. Kerry, Dale Murphy, Manis Samons, Larry Summerville, Elwood Woodcock.

(C) ORDINATIONS: will not be made based upon friendships, the amount of tithes given, tenure in the Church, or any other reason contrary to the Word of God. But will be made based upon:

(1) Need - Election to the Ministry: "Men and brethren, this scripture must NEEDS have been fulfilled." ( Acts 1:16); also in Acts 6:1-3 "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.; vs.3 ” Wherefore, brethren choose out among yourselves seven men on an honest report, full of the Holy Spirit whom we may appoint over this business.” In like fashion the members of the church may recommend to the ministry those candidates to be appointed to the ministry pursuant to the scripture.

Any needs should be brought to the MINISTRY for resolution by the Church or from within the ministry itself.

(2) Qualifications. "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be..."(I Tim. 3: 1-13); and "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ORDAIN elders in every city, as I had appointed thee. If any be..." (Titus 1:5-9)

(3) Ministerial Responsibility. The Ministry of the Church, as ordained and established by Jesus Christ, shall make all appointments and ordinations pursuant to (1) A Need, (2) Qualifications for the office, (3) and, pursuant to the Word of God. "(Acts 6:1-6) (Acts 1: 15-26). The ministry is accountable to his peers and the membership of the church.

Individuals nominated and appointed and ordained to the ministry shall represent its members at the meetings of the ministry for the purpose of carrying out the functions of the organization.

(D) REMOVAL FROM THE MINISTRY: (Minister no longer in good standing); At any time a minister begins to abuse his office; or begins espousing, preaching, teaching, handing out tapes, literature, or materials of any kind which set forth anything contrary to the doctrines and practices of the Church of God, Ministries International he may be removed from office by a special meeting called for that purpose and by a majority vote of the ministry.

### SECTION 3 Establish Regional Operations and Area Coordinators

(A) As needed, and with the approval of the majority of the ministry, recommend ministers to serve as Area Coordinators and establish regions throughout the U.S.

#### (B) Responsibilities of Area Coordinators

Each Area Coordinator is a peer among equals, selected from among the ministry of the church for the purpose of overseeing the ministers, churches, or individual lay members in his assigned area. It is understood that, as God adds to His church, He will raise up more members and ministers, and that the original areas assigned to each Area Coordinator will eventually be reapportioned to admit such expected growth. The responsibilities of the Area Coordinators are as follows:

(1) Responsible for the spiritual well-being and doctrinal faithfulness of each chartered or non-

chartered church, hosted fellowship group, or individual lay member in his assigned area.

(2) Responsible as an organizer, counselor, teacher, spiritual example and friend.

(3) Responsible for putting in place church development programs, such as developing local church mailing lists, conducting leadership seminars, establishing speaking clubs, ladies' clubs, youth clubs and activities, approving those who are capable of being song leaders, appointing or approving those who are authorized to deliver sermonettes, approving the issuance of Speaking Credentials, and approving any others whom he may deem qualified to assume positions of leadership in the local churches.

(4) Responsible for seeking out, working with and developing potential teachers and speakers. As Paul instructed Timothy to "ordain elders in every church", so the Area Coordinator, together with other ministers and members in his area, shall determine the qualifications of men who can be ordained as "Elders" or Deacons, or deaconesses.

(5) Responsible for approving as "hosts" those he feels are qualified to lead an hosted fellowship group; for raising up new churches; for promoting local and regional evangelistic campaigns, leadership seminars, and youth activities.

(6) Responsible for preserving and maintaining the "faith once delivered to the Saints", and dealing with any aberrations in doctrine, divisions or dissensions which might arise among the churches in his area, bearing in mind what Paul commanded Timothy, "Preach the word: be instant [keep at it] in season, out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering [patience] and doctrine. For the time will come when they shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (I Timothy 4:2-4). Responsible for pointing out to his fellow Area Coordinators any false teacher and who would lead the flock away from the doctrines and practices of the Church of God, Ministries International.

(7) The Area Coordinator is responsible for maintaining financial records of all Churches of which he is the pastor. (He may wish to appoint his wife, an assistant pastor, a deacon, or responsible lay member to assist him) so that the brethren can receive full benefit allowed by the Internal Revenue Service under Tax Code 501(c)3 for deduction of charitable contribution to the church. These should be submitted to headquarters quarterly, and he should encourage other churches in his area to submit financial records directly to headquarters, and they should be on time.

(8) Responsible for faithful attendance at the Church's annual "Feast of Tabernacles", and encouraging all those in his area to do so. Responsible for programs to assist the poor and elderly to attend the feast, and responsible for helping to search out and locate potential feast sites for the future.

(9) Each Area Coordinator is accountable to his peers and the membership of the church. If he should act contrary to the policies, doctrines and practices of the church he will be removed from

his ministerial functions.

#### SECTION 4 Church Governance -- Decision and Policy Making of the Church

In accordance to Jesus' words in the New Testament, as He established His church. Jesus stated, "And I will give unto you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

This authority was given to all the apostles (the ministry). It is clear from scripture that Jesus left no one person in charge. Each had a personal responsibility and they all served the brethren as a body (team). It shall be the policy of the Church of God, Ministries International to operate in like fashion.

It is also clear that the New Testament Church established a spokesperson to represent the church as is the example found in Acts 15. At the Jerusalem Conference, following the elders and the apostles meeting (vs.6), James reported the conclusion of the matter to the brethren (the church). Acts 15:19.

To accomplish the task of the operation of the church, to set policy and make decisions, The Church of God, Ministries International will hold an annual ministerial conference to:

- A. Prioritize the needs of the work
- B. Appoint individuals or teams best qualified to fill those needs
- C. Determine the future direction of the work, its needs, and its goals and objectives.

All decisions shall be by a majority vote of the ministry conducted at the annual ministerial conference, except in cases that require a special meeting.

### **ARTICLE 5 The Organizational Structure**

#### SECTION 1 Organizational Structure / Membership

(A) Christ said, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this Rock (Christ) I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Mat. 16:18). Christ is the Head of the Church and therefore, shall build it.

(B) Membership: "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him". Membership will be those individuals who voluntarily chose to be a part of this organization, and whose names are recorded on the roles at the home office. All members shall have equal rights as prescribed herein.

1. The Church of God, Ministries International recognizes the absolute sovereignty of each individual, and the deeply PERSONAL nature of the relationship of each individual lay member to Jesus Christ, Who is the Living Head of the Church. Therefore, all members are in VOLUNTARY association with the church and its ministry.

2. At any time a member begins to cause division, or begins espousing, preaching, teaching, handing out tapes, literature, or materials of any kind which set forth anything contrary to the

doctrines and practices of the Church of God, Ministries International they may be removed as a member in good standing by a special meeting of the ministry called for that purpose, and by a majority vote of the ministry.

( I Cor. 12:18). " No man can come to me unless the Father draw him..." (John 6:44)

(C) " For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many." (I Cor. 12:12-14)

(D) Whereas Christ said unto his disciples, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Mat 16:19). "And again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Mat. 18: 19-20). Christ established a MINISTRY to Administer and Operate the Church. ( I Cor. 12: 5,6).

The Ministry shall resolve minor issues within the church, pursuant to Christ's instructions. If the local minister cannot resolve the matter he should seek counsel with two or three other ministers. If the issue still cannot be resolved, it should be taken to the Area Coordinator for resolution.

(E) "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." (I Cor. 12: 28). "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:" (Eph. 4: 12-13). .

(F) The Church of God, Ministries International recognizes that there are many different FUNCTIONS within the ministry (servants) of the church, and, within the Members of the Church itself. However, no Host or Member shall ever supersede the minister assigned oversight of any particular church group.

The Church of God, Ministries International REJECTS the hierarchical type government structure that incorporates a RANK SYSTEM within the ministry.

(G) "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock." (I Peter 5: 1-4). Ministers are servants of Jesus Christ. They are not to lord over the flock.

**SECTION 2 Conflict Resolution:** All issues which cannot be resolved on the local level or by the Local Minister, or Area Coordinator will be decided by the ministry pursuant to the Biblical

example ..." When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question." ...And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them."..."And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. (Acts 15: 2, 4, 6).

Criteria for resolving major issues:

(A) Need or problem exists

(B) Recommendations for resolution can come from the ministry or members

(C) Ministerial Resolution: to be decided at the annual ministerial conference or emergency meeting, if needed.

## **ARTICLE 6 Doctrinal Beliefs**

(1) The Church of God, Ministries International hereby adopts as its doctrines the whole word of God, as revealed in its most ancient manuscripts.

(2) The Church of God, Ministries International hereby adopts the Statement of Beliefs as attached to these Constitution and By-Laws as Attachment A.

## **ARTICLE 7 OPEN ARMS CHURCH**

(1) The Church of God, Ministries International declares it is an "OPEN ARMS CHURCH". Any person, regardless of nationality, race, gender, color, creed, religious or political persuasion, is welcome to fellowship with the Church of God, Ministries International at any of its regular worship services, Bible studies, annual festivals or other church occasions, so long as all such persons refrain from espousing, preaching, teaching, handing out tapes, literature, or materials of any kind which set forth anything contrary to the doctrines and practices of the Church of God, Ministries International.

(2) The most important criterion for fellowship is the spirit of forgiveness and tolerance; an absence of judging or condemning others, and a willingness to be obedient to Christ's instructions in Matthew 18 of going to one's brother ( or sister) in the case of any conflicts and resolving the issue in dispute.

(3) Fellowship with the church may not be denied because of "personal problems" in one's

private life. Rather, it is the belief that all such persons need the buttressing of church worship services and fellowship with brethren of like mind who are themselves striving to live a life of overcoming Satan's wiles, their own human natures, and the world around them.

(4) The Church of God, Ministries International rejects the traditional concept of "excommunication" or "marking" as practiced by various religious hierarchies. Instead, the church accepts the admonition of Jesus Christ, "...if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou has gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them tell it unto the church; but if he neglects to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican" (Matthew 18:15-17).

Furthermore, the Church of God, Ministries International accepts the admonition of Paul, "Now I beseech you, brethren mark (take note of) them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Romans 16:17). Paul wrote to the lay membership, thus placing the responsibility for avoiding heretics or unruly persons on the shoulders of the individual. Each Area Coordinator, minister or host of a fellowship group is charged with the responsibility of keeping peace in the local group, and may, as required, deny fellowship to any person who is disorderly or contentious, or who attempts to espouse contrary doctrines or practices.

The Church urges each lay member to obey God's word which commands us, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, YE WHICH ARE SPIRITUAL, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1)

(5) As an "open arms, open door" church the Church of God, Ministries International welcomes close cooperation with independently-incorporated church groups, so long as said church groups do not conflict in doctrine and beliefs of the Church of God, Ministries International.

## **ARTICLE 8**

### **Tithes & Offerings**

(1) "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts,..." (Mal. 3:8-10). "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these OUGHT YE TO HAVE DONE, and not to leave the other undone." (Mat. 23:23). "For the priesthood being CHANGED there is made of necessity a change also of the law. (tithing law changed from the Levitical Priesthood to the Church)"(Heb 7:12)

(2) "Thou shalt truly (accurately) tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose to

place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that you mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always. And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the Lord thy God shall choose to set his name there; when the Lord thy God hath blessed thee; Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thy hand, and SHALT GO unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose;..."(Deut. 14:22-25). Truly God commands we save a second tithe to be used as a festival tithe.

(3) "Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the Feast of Weeks, and in the Feast of Tabernacles: and thy shall not appear before the Lord empty: Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee." (Deut 16:16-17)..The Church of God, Ministries International will take up offerings on each of God's seven annual Holy Days. At no time will offerings be taken up during regular Sabbath services or special Bible Studies.

The Church of God, Ministries International will recognize the principle of tithes and offerings as outlined in the Holy Scriptures. However, the Church of God, Ministries International recognizes the individual sovereignty associated with giving and will not make any attempt to enforce this principle upon anyone.

## **ARTICLE 9**

### **Local Churches**

- (1) All local churches shall be assigned a Minister of Record (Titus 1:5)
- (2) No host, deacon or deaconness shall supersede the Minister of Record in Church matters (Mat. 16:19)
- (3 ) When possible, worship services of each local church shall consist of the standard format:
  - (a) Song Service (two or three hymns) (If music is available and a song leader is present)
  - (b) Opening Prayer
  - (c) Sermonette (if minister or credentialed speaker available)
  - (d) Hymn
  - (e) Announcements -- Should be brief.
  - (f) Sermon (Taped or Live)

(g) Hymn

(f) Closing Prayer

\*It is recognized that some hosts are female and male leadership may not be present. In that case, adjustments may be made as needed.

(4) No Host or Member will be permitted to speak without having an approved Speaking Credential approved by the Area Coordinator.

(5) The Church of God, Ministries International, adhering to Holy Writ, expressly forbids women to preach, or speak to the church during worship services, except that women can speak during seminars or conferences when scheduled, or can teach other women and children as permitted by scripture.

(6) The Church of God, Ministries International eschews the practice of going from "door to door" and attempting to teach those who have not asked, or force literature upon those who have not asked for it.

## **ARTICLE 10**

### **Amendments**

(1) This Constitution and these By-Laws of the Church of God, Ministries International may not be amended except at a meeting of the Full Ministry, and only after any proposed amendment has been submitted to the Ministry in writing.

(2) Constitutional amendments shall be approved by a 2/3 vote of all ministers. (Pursuant to Article 5; Section 2).