

**CONSTITUTION**

**OF**

**CHURCH OF GOD, A**  
**WORLDWIDE ASSOCIATION,**  
**INC.**

**A FLORIDA NOT-FOR-PROFIT**  
**CORPORATION**

## **Preamble**

Individuals who are called by God the Father and respond to that call by repenting, accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior and being baptized and receiving the Holy Spirit with the laying on of hands comprise the Church of God, the spiritual Body of Christ. This Constitution is established for the purpose of outlining the most important principles in efforts to promote the gospel message and care for those whom God has called.

## **Article 1 – Mission Statement**

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The mission of Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., is to take the gospel of the Kingdom of God to the whole world, to make disciples of those whom God has called and to teach those disciples to observe all that Jesus Christ has commanded (Matthew 24:14; Matthew 28:19-20).

## **Article 2 – Name of Organization**

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The name of the Corporation is Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc. The Corporation may choose to use other names as permitted by law.

## **Article 3 – Purpose and Spiritual Principles**

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Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc. (“Corporation”) is organized as a not-for-profit corporation under the laws of the State of Florida. Consistent with the Articles of Incorporation, the Corporation is a church organization and shall operate within the requirements of Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3).

The ecclesiastical work of the Corporation consists of preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God to the world, making disciples of those God may call, caring for those disciples and providing opportunities for every Church member to contribute to the work of the Church (Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 4:16). As part of the spiritual Body of Christ, each individual seeks to follow these spiritual principles. It is through the death of Jesus Christ that we can be justified, and it is through His life that we can be saved (Romans 5:8-10). The Church of God is to seek first the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33), which is the government and family of God to be established on this earth at the return of Jesus Christ. The Church of God is committed to living a life here and now that resembles that of Jesus Christ, from whom we take the title of Christian. As a spiritual body, the Church adheres to the spiritual principles found in God’s Word, the Holy Bible (2 Timothy 3:16). These principles are the guideposts for the Church’s work and for the lives of those whom God has called. The Church believes that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, and both elders and Church members strive to follow His example in everything (1 Peter 2:24).

## **Article 4 – Fundamental Beliefs**

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### **Introduction**

Doctrinal integrity is very important to Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc. (Titus 2:7). God has revealed His truth to His Church, and He has given that Church the responsibility to maintain doctrinal integrity by teaching as “[we have] been taught” (Titus 1:9) and teaching things that are “proper for sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1). The following statements constitute the Fundamental Beliefs of the Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc. These Fundamental Beliefs, based on Holy Scripture, do not constitute the Church’s entire body of beliefs but represent its fundamental or foundational beliefs.

A fundamental belief of the Church can not be changed by any one person or small group of individuals; but if it is determined that a change or edit is necessary, such a change requires a minimum approval of three-fourths (3/4) of all credentialed elders balloting. In addition, the same three-fourths (3/4) level of approval from those credentialed elders who ballot is required before an established doctrine can be changed, including doctrines that are not listed below but are part of the accepted and established doctrinal beliefs of the Church. Doctrinal questions will be addressed by the Doctrine Committee of Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc. This committee will be responsible for determining what constitutes a doctrinal change and whether the proposal should go to all elders unless said proposal originated with the Doctrine Committee itself. In such cases, the Ministerial Board of Directors will determine whether a proposal constitutes a doctrinal change and should go to all elders for approval.

### **4.1 The Godhead**

God the Father is an eternally existing Spirit, a perfect, personal Being of supreme love, intelligence, knowledge, justice, power and authority. It was through the Word (who became Jesus Christ) that He created all things that exist. The Father is the Source of life, the Sustainer of the universe through His power. There is one Lord, Jesus Christ, who has eternally existed. He came to earth to do the will of the Father. He is the Messiah, the Christ and the divine Son of the living God, who was born of human flesh to the virgin Mary. God is an eternal family currently consisting of the Father and the Son. Both the Father and Son are involved in the creative work of expanding this family by bringing many children (sons and daughters) to glory. The Holy Spirit is the power of God and the Spirit of life eternal, not a separate entity or being.

*Scriptural support:* Ephesians 4:6; 1 Corinthians 8:6; John 1:1-4; Colossians 1:16; Ephesians 3:15; 2 Timothy 1:7; Hebrews 2:10; 2 Corinthians 6:18.

### **4.2 The Angelic Realm and Satan**

The angelic realm, consisting of various types of spirit beings, was created by God. A former “covering cherub,” Lucifer, rebelled against God’s authority and became Satan the devil. As Lucifer, he influenced one-third of the angels to follow him. Those who followed him are now evil spirits known as demons. Satan the devil is the adversary of

both God and mankind. He and his demons influence mankind to reject God and His law. These evil spirits have been allowed temporary dominion over the earth and have deceived the majority of human beings. The angels who remained faithful to God serve as ministering spirits to those responding to God's calling.

*Scriptural support:* Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 8:12; 2 Timothy 2:26; John 12:31; 16:11; Revelation 12:4, 9; 20:1-3, 7, 10; Leviticus 16:21-22; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 11:14; Ephesians 2:2; Hebrews 1:14.

### **4.3 Humanity**

Human beings, both male and female, were created in the image of God with the potential to partake of God's divine nature as children in His eternal family. Humans are mortal beings relying on the breath of life and are subject to corruption and decay. They do not have an immortal soul nor do they possess eternal life at this time. Eternal life is a gift of God, given only to those who accept His calling and the terms and conditions expressed in the Scriptures. God gave Adam and Eve the choice of eternal life through obedience to Him or death through sin. Adam and Eve succumbed to sin by disobeying God. As a result, death entered the world. All humans have sinned and are therefore subject to death. In God's plan it is appointed for man to "die once."

*Scriptural support:* Genesis 1:26; 2 Peter 1:4; Hebrews 9:27; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Romans 3:23; 5:12; 6:23; 8:16-17.

### **4.4 The Purpose of Human Life**

God's purpose for human beings is to add them as children to His eternal family. While it is clear that eternal life is a gift from God, He expects His children to respond to His calling, develop righteous character by overcoming sin, and grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. When Christ returns to this earth, these faithful humans will be born as spirit beings into the family of God and will reign on earth as kings and priests with Christ.

*Scriptural support:* John 1:12; Romans 6:15-16; 8:14-17, 30; Acts 2:39; 1 Corinthians 15:50-53; 2 Peter 3:18; Revelation 1:6; 3:5; 5:10.

### **4.5 The Word of God**

Scripture, both the Old and the New Testaments of the Holy Bible, is the Word of God and contains God's complete revelation of His will and plan for humanity. Directly inspired by God in thought and word, it is perfect and infallible as originally written. Scripture is the supreme and final authority for faith and life. It is the source for doctrine and the foundation for all truth.

*Scriptural support:* 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; John 10:35; 17:17.

#### **4.6 Sin and God's Law**

Sin is the transgression of the law of God, which is spiritual, perfect, holy, just and good. God's law is based upon the two great principles of love toward God and love toward neighbor. The Ten Commandments expound these foundational principles of God's law of love. Breaking any part of God's law brings upon a person the penalty of death. Those who love God and seek eternal life will strive to keep God's commandments. Obedience to God's law produces happiness and peace of mind. Disobedience to God's law produces misery and strife and ultimately eternal death.

*Scriptural support:* 1 John 3:4; 5:3; Matthew 5:17-19; 19:17-19; 22:37-40; James 2:10-11; Romans 2:5-9; 6:23; 7:12-14; 13:8-10.

#### **4.7 The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ**

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son so humans may have eternal life. In God's perfect righteousness, the penalty for our sins must be paid in full. After living a human life without sin, even though tempted in all points as we are, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died as the perfect sacrifice for all the sins of humanity. As God in the flesh and the Creator of all humanity, His death makes it possible for each person and humanity as a whole to be forgiven of their sins, released from the death penalty that comes upon all because of sin and reconciled to God the Father. This plan of salvation for mankind existed from the foundation of the world.

*Scriptural support:* John 1:18; 3:16; Ephesians 1:11; Colossians 1:16-17, 22; Hebrews 4:15; 9:15; 10:12; 1 John 2:2; 4:10; Revelation 5:9; 13:8.

#### **4.8 Three Days and Three Nights**

Jesus Christ was raised from the dead by the Father after His body lay for three days and three nights in the grave. The length of time that He was in the grave was the only sign He gave to prove He was the Messiah. The resurrection of Jesus Christ made immortality possible for mortal human beings. After His resurrection, Christ ascended into heaven, where He now sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest, elder Brother and Advocate with the Father.

*Scriptural support:* 1 Peter 1:17-21; 3:22; Matthew 12:39-40; 1 Corinthians 15:53; 2 Timothy 1:10; John 20:17; Hebrews 2:10-15; 8:1; 12:2; 1 John 2:1.

#### **4.9 Repentance**

Repentance is a gift from God—a gift that is necessary for salvation and a proper relationship with God. All who wish to be pardoned from the death penalty that comes through sin must genuinely repent of their sins, fully surrender their lives to God and obey His commandments. They must by faith accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, their Lord and Master, their High Priest and their soon-coming King. These individuals are justified, forgiven of their sins as an act of divine grace, being baptized

and receiving the Holy Spirit with the laying on of hands. At baptism they become part of the spiritual Body of Christ, the true Church of God.

*Scriptural support:* Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:29-32; 2 Corinthians 7:10; John 3:16; Ephesians 1:7; 2:7-10; Romans 3:21-26; 5:5; 6:6; 8:4, 9-10, 14; 13:10; Jeremiah 33:8; John 14:16-17; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Philippians 2:3-5; 2 Timothy 2:25.

#### **4.10 Water Baptism**

Water baptism by immersion after repentance pictures the forgiveness of sin, the burial of the old man and the beginning of a new life in Christ. Through prayer and the laying on of hands following baptism, repentant believers receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and become part of the spiritual Body of Jesus Christ. By yielding to and being led by the Holy Spirit, those who have repented and been baptized experience a true change in life, attitude and way of thinking.

*Scriptural support:* John 3:23; Acts 2:38; 8:14-17; 19:5-6; Ephesians 4:22-24; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 6:1-6.

#### **4.11 The Seventh-Day Sabbath**

The seventh day of the week is the Sabbath of the Lord our God, and on this day humans are commanded to rest from their labors and worship Him. Established and blessed by God at creation, the seventh day of the week begins at sunset on Friday and continues until sunset on Saturday. The Sabbath is an identifying sign and a perpetual covenant between God and His people. True Christians follow the example of Jesus Christ, the apostles and the New Testament Church in observing the seventh-day Sabbath.

*Scriptural support:* Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 20:8-11; 31:13-17; Leviticus 23:3; Isaiah 58:13; Hebrews 4:4-10; Mark 1:21; 2:27-28; 6:2; Acts 13:42-44; 17:2; 18:4; Luke 4:31; 1 John 2:4-6.

#### **4.12 The Passover**

The Passover is to be observed in the evening, at the beginning of the 14th of Nisan (Abib) in accordance with the Hebrew calendar as preserved by the Jews. The New Covenant Passover symbols instituted by Jesus Christ on the night before He died—foot-washing, unleavened bread and wine—are part of this service. Christians follow Jesus Christ's instruction and example by observing the Passover annually as a memorial of His death.

*Scriptural support:* Exodus 12; Matthew 26:18-30; John 13:1-15; Luke 22:1-20; John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7.

#### **4.13 The Festivals of God**

The seven annual festivals are special times of assembly. Given to ancient Israel by God through Moses and kept by Christ, the apostles and the New Testament Church,

they are commanded to be observed today. These festivals reveal God's plan of salvation for mankind. They will continue to be observed during the Millennium.

*Scriptural support:* Colossians 2:16-17; 1 Peter 1:19-20; 1 Corinthians 5:8; 15:22-26; 16:8; James 1:18; Exodus 23:14-17; Leviticus 23; Luke 2:41-42; 22:14-15; John 7:2, 8, 10, 14; Acts 2:1; 18:21; 20:16; Zechariah 14:16-19.

#### **4.14 Biblical Food Laws**

Creatures identified as "unclean" in the Bible are not to be consumed by humans. Lists of "clean" and "unclean" meat are found in God's instructions concerning what should and should not be eaten.

*Scriptural support:* Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14.

#### **4.15 Tithing**

Tithing is commanded by God. Through tithing, one honors God with his material goods and assists in preaching the gospel, providing for the physical needs of the Church and caring for needy members. A special festival tithe makes it possible for one to attend the commanded festivals of God.

*Scriptural support:* Proverbs 3:9-10; Genesis 14:17-20; Numbers 18:21; Malachi 3:8; 1 Corinthians 9:7-14; Deuteronomy 14:22-29.

#### **4.16 Military Service and War**

Because of Jesus' teaching that we are to love our enemies and the instruction of God to respect human life, Christians should not serve in the military. The biblical teaching is that if anyone even hates his brother, he is a murderer. Being in the military would create problems keeping the Sabbath and holy days. Because Christians are to obey God rather than men, they need to maintain jurisdiction over their lives. Christians must be careful not to let human issues and concerns distract them from their role as ambassadors in God's coming Kingdom. Christ declared that His Kingdom was not of this world; therefore His servants would not fight.

*Scriptural support:* Genesis 9:6; Exodus 20:13; Matthew 5:21-22; Luke 6:27-35; John 18:36; 1 Corinthians 7:21-23; Acts 5:29; 1 John 3:15; 2 Corinthians 5:20.

#### **4.17 The Church of God**

The Church of God is a spiritual body composed of believers who have and are being led by the Holy Spirit. The Church is not a denomination, a human organization or a building but the people God is working with in any age. The biblical name of this church is the "Church of God." Its mission is to preach the gospel of the coming Kingdom of God to all nations and to make disciples of all who respond to God's calling, assisting them in their spiritual development and reconciliation to God.

*Scriptural support:* Acts 2:38-39, 47; 20:28; Romans 8:14; 14:19; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:11-16; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 10:32; 11:16, 22; 12:27; 15:9; 2 Corinthians 1:1; 5:18-20; Galatians 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 1 Timothy 3:5; Mark 16:15; Matthew 24:14; 28:18-20; John 6:44, 65; 17:11.

#### **4.18 Promises to Abraham**

God's fulfillment of His promises to Abraham, a man called the father of the faithful, represents God's enduring faithfulness and provides important keys to understanding biblical prophecy. As promised, God multiplied Abraham's descendants so that Abraham literally became the father of many nations. God materially prospered his descendants: Isaac, Jacob (also called Israel) and Jacob's 12 sons who were the progenitors of the 12 tribes of ancient Israel. Descendants of these peoples continue as prominent nations today (particularly the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh) because they have inherited the physical blessings of Abraham. In addition to the physical blessings promised Abraham, another promise was made by God to this patriarch—a promise of eternal inheritance through his Seed (Jesus Christ), which all people, regardless of their physical lineage, may receive. All who respond to God's calling belong to Christ and are considered Abraham's seed. Understanding these promises made to Abraham provides a more accurate understanding of the world today and the messages of the prophets.

*Scriptural support:* Genesis 12:1-3; 32:28; Psalm 111:1-10; Romans 4:12, 16; 9:7-8; Galatians 3:16, 28-29; Hebrews 9:15.

#### **4.19 The Return of Jesus Christ to Earth**

At the end of this present evil age, Jesus Christ will visibly return to earth to establish the Kingdom of God and reign forever and ever, beginning with a 1,000-year period commonly called the Millennium. He will sit upon the throne of David, ruling all nations as King of Kings and serving as High Priest to all who recognize Him as their Lord and Master. As prophesied, He will at this time restore all things and establish the Kingdom of God forever.

*Scriptural support:* Daniel 2:44; 7:14, 18, 27; Matthew 24:30, 44; Revelation 1:7; 11:15; 19:16; 20:4-6; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-16; John 14:3; Isaiah 9:7; 40:10-11; Hebrews 7:24; Jeremiah 23:5; Luke 1:32-33; Acts 1:11; 3:21; 15:16.

#### **4.20 The Resurrections**

Being resurrected from the grave is the only hope of eternal life for deceased human beings. The Scriptures reveal that there will be three distinct future resurrection periods for those who have died. At the return of Jesus Christ, a first resurrection to eternal life will take place for all of God's faithful servants who have died throughout the ages. These individuals will rise from their graves and, along with living humans who have the Holy Spirit residing within them, will be changed into immortal, spirit beings. After the 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ on the earth, there will be a second resurrection to physical life for the majority of all people who have ever lived. These people will then

have their first and only opportunity to hear, understand and respond to God’s calling. If they become converted, they will receive eternal life. There will be a third resurrection for the incorrigible to a brief period of consciousness, in which they will receive the righteous judgment of God—their destruction in the lake of fire. This resurrection is reserved for those who have rejected God’s offer of salvation, reaping eternal death, also called the second death, from which there is no further resurrection.

*Scriptural support:* 1 Corinthians 15:19, 45-53; Acts 23:6; John 5:21-29; Romans 6:23; 8:10-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Ezekiel 37:1-14; Revelation 20:4-5, 11-15; John 3:16; Matthew 25:46.

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## **Article 5 – Governance Structure**

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### **Introduction**

In 1 Corinthians 12, the Church is compared to a body composed of many members with each member having a responsibility within the body. Jesus Christ is described as the head of this body (Ephesians 5:23). Ephesians 4 states that, within the Church, there are different and unique offices of responsibility.

### **5.1 Overall Governance Structure**

#### **5.1.1 Governing Documents**

In addition to the Articles of Incorporation, the governing documents of Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., consist of this Constitution and its Bylaws. In the event of a conflict between the Constitution and the Bylaws, the Constitution shall prevail. As a rule of construction, whenever possible, the governing documents shall be read and construed in such a way that the provisions of the respective documents are harmonized. Any conflict identified between the two documents will be resolved by the Ministerial Board of Directors (MBOD) by a majority ballot in consultation with the president and his management team. The decision of the MBOD will be final.

#### **5.1.2 Ministerial Board of Directors (MBOD)**

Seven elders, each with a minimum of 20 years of ministerial experience (as determined from the date of ordination) are selected by the elders of Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., to serve as the Ministerial Board of Directors, which is the corporate board for the Corporation. In addition to their legal duties, the board serves in an advisory capacity to the administration.

For purposes of determining the length of time for an elder’s ministerial experience, said experience will be deemed to have accrued towards the required minimum 20 years if such experience occurred under the auspices of any of the following church organizations—Radio Church of God (Pasadena, California), Worldwide Church of God (Pasadena, California), United Church

of God, an International Association (Milford, Ohio), Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., or any other Church of God organization that is or shall be, in the sole discretion of the Ministerial Board of Directors, recognized as an organization, body or spiritual entity that professes or professed a body of ecclesiastical doctrine that is substantially similar to the Fundamental Beliefs of the Corporation—referred to individually or collectively as “Church of God Organization(s).”

### **5.1.3 Corporate Officers**

The officers of the Corporation are president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. Additional officers may be added as deemed necessary by the Ministerial Board of Directors. Such officers’ duties will be prescribed by the MBOD.

### **5.1.4 President and Management Team**

The president is responsible for the day-to-day management of the organization. As such, he proposes operations and nominates for approval by the MBOD operation managers to assist him in his management duties. The president and his operation managers comprise the management team and are considered the administration.

### **5.1.5 Career Elders**

A career elder is defined as one who is currently an employee of Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., and has been employed, in the aggregate, by the Corporation for a minimum of five years while an ordained elder; or one who is currently in the ministry of Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., and has been employed by one or more Church of God Organizations for a minimum of five years while an ordained elder. To be identified as a career elder, an individual must have been ordained as an elder for a minimum of five years while employed by a Church of God Organization. It is not required that these years are consecutive, but they must reach a minimum total of five years in the aggregate.

### **5.1.6 Credentialed Elders**

A credentialed elder is defined as an elder who has been ordained to the ministry and has received credentials from Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc. As long as an individual maintains those credentials and is considered an elder in good standing, he continues to be considered a “credentialed elder” of Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc.

### **5.1.7 Doctrine Committee**

The Doctrine Committee is made up of five elders, each with a minimum of 20 years of ministerial experience, who have reputations for doctrinal integrity.

Committee members must be nominated by the president and approved by the Ministerial Board of Directors with a minimum of five out of seven members approving. This committee is responsible for reviewing papers and statements, addressing questions of doctrine and ruling as to when an item is a proposed doctrinal change (which requires the approval of three-fourths of the elders balloting). The members of the Doctrine Committee shall choose a chairman from among their group by a majority ballot. The chairman serves at the pleasure of the committee.

### **5.1.9 Church Member Advisory Committees**

In addition to advisory committees in local congregations, the leadership of the Church (including the president, his management team and the MBOD) are encouraged to establish advisory and planning committees from within the Church membership to further the work of the Church. These committees are established for the purpose of providing special expertise and advice to the various operations of the Church such as Ministerial Services, media and finances. These committees carry no administrative responsibility and are designed to facilitate ready access to the many talents among the Church membership, providing invaluable contributions that will lead to a more successful operation of the Church.

## **5.2 Governance Structure of Local Congregations**

### **5.2.1 Local Church Congregation**

A congregation located anywhere in the world that is pastored by a credentialed elder of Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., is a local congregation of Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc. Each group identified as a local Church congregation agrees to support the governing documents, governing structure and the Fundamental Beliefs of the Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc.

### **5.2.2 Church Pastor**

Within the United States, each local congregation of Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., is pastored by an elder who has been appointed by the administration of the Corporation. He must be a credentialed elder of sufficient experience, as determined by the president and his management team. He will be provided such training as deemed appropriate for the office of church pastor.

Outside the United States, each local congregation of Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., is pastored by an elder who has been appointed by the senior minister for the region (senior pastor, regional pastor, regional director or the equivalent) after consulting with the president and his management team. The individual appointed must be a credentialed elder and of sufficient experience to serve as a pastor, as determined by the senior

minister for the region. The elder will be provided such training as deemed appropriate for the office of church pastor.

### **5.2.3 Elder**

An individual who has been ordained to the ministry of a Church of God Organization and has received credentials from Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., is defined as an elder of Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc. As long as an elder remains credentialed, he will continue to serve as an elder of Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., for all ecclesiastical purposes and for purposes of balloting.

Collectively, the elders constitute the members of the Corporation. An individual elder shall continue as a member of the Corporation, together with all rights and duties pertaining to that status, for as long as he is credentialed as an elder by the Corporation. Elders shall have the right to ballot on matters specifically enumerated in the Bylaws.

An elder serves the brethren and assists the pastor in local Church congregations.

### **5.2.4 Deacons and Deaconesses**

Deacons and deaconesses are defined as individuals who have been ordained to the office by a pastor. A deacon's responsibilities, as delineated in Acts 6, are to serve the physical needs, as well as to be a spiritual leader of the local congregation. A deaconess is defined as a female "servant of the Church." She is ordained by the pastor to the position of deaconess and serves the needs of the membership in the local congregation as requested.

Each pastor in the U.S. shall seek approval for ordinations to the offices of deacon and deaconess from his immediate supervisor or with the operation manager for the International Work for those outside of the U.S.

### **5.2.5 Local Advisory Committees**

For the well-being of each congregation, it is important that the Church membership be actively involved. To achieve this goal, each congregation, led by the pastor, will determine the best options for promoting and encouraging member involvement and participation in the work and activities of each local congregation. Such initiatives could include the formation of committees, organizational structures with specific member assignments, service projects, etc. that bring the pastor, elders, deacons, deaconesses and members of the congregation together in service to God, the Church and one another.

### **5.2.6 Church Members**

The term “Church members,” as distinguished from members of the Corporation, refers to individuals who attend, as they are able, worship services sponsored by the Church; who have been properly baptized by immersion according to a process and ceremony recognized and accepted by the management team of Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc.; and who have affirmatively elected to be identified as members of the Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc.

### **5.3 Governance Structure Outside the United States**

#### **5.3.1 National Councils and/or Boards**

In areas outside the United States where there are congregations of Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., a legal entity shall be established wherever possible and wherever advisable under the circumstances. If possible, the name “Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc.” or a substantially similar name should be included in the name selected for the legal entity.

Each national entity, by a ballot of its elders, may choose to have a national council or board to fulfill its legal requirements. The elders in the region will establish the responsibilities of the board or national council. The overall governmental structure and configuration should be consistent with that adopted by the elders of Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc. Each area, by a ballot of the elders, will choose its own structure and national or area leadership (senior pastor or regional director) in consultation with the president of the Corporation and his management team and, in addition, determine the process for removal or replacement of said leadership in consultation with the president and his management team. Or, where possible legally, a national entity may choose to be managed from the principal office of the Corporation through a senior pastor or a regional director appointed by the president and his management team.

Only one entity in a nation or region may be recognized by Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc. If more than one entity claims authority, the matter must be resolved by the MBOD after consultation with the president and his management team. Their decision will be final.

#### **5.3.2 Role of the President Outside the United States**

For reasons of administrative order and efficiency, the president of Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., provides spiritual leadership for the Church worldwide. For legal purposes he is also the chief executive officer for the U.S. Corporation. The president is the leader of the Church in all areas of the world and has the responsibility to work with the leadership from each of these areas in establishing policies and developing the Church in the different nations.

Where there is a legal entity in place, the president will work within the laws of the local jurisdiction in exercising his leadership. The president will appoint leaders where the elders in the region have agreed to such a process, and he will accept leaders as appointed by the elders in the regions where they have chosen to manage their own affairs by an approved process. Each national entity that has duly associated with Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., agrees to consult with the president and his management team prior to naming leadership. In all cases, the president will be responsible for working with and advising the appointed leaders in these regions outside the U.S.

Any disagreements between the president and the duly recognized leadership in areas outside the U.S. will be settled by the MBOD. The president may appoint an “International Liaison” to assist him in fulfilling his duties in this responsibility. The president and the international leadership will work together in developing the selection process as well as the development of a job description for such a position.

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## **Article 6 – Roles of the Elders and Members**

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### **Introduction**

In 1 Corinthians 12, the apostle Paul describes the Church by using the analogy of a human body. As is the case in the physical body, each member in the spiritual Body of the Church performs a specific function for the Body to work properly.

### **6.1 Corporate Membership**

All elders who are credentialed by Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., and who are considered to be elders in good standing, as defined by the MBOD and the management team, are balloting members of the Corporation, Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., except in cases limited by the Bylaws. Credentialed elders have the option to choose not to ballot.

### **6.2 Duties of Elders Within the Corporation**

Credentialed elders of Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., who remain elders in good standing, have the following duties within the Corporation:

- 1) To ballot on any proposed changes in the established doctrines of the Church, approval of which shall require three-fourths (3/4) of those who ballot.
- 2) To ballot for the selection of members of the MBOD according to the approved process as identified in the Bylaws.
- 3) To ballot on the proposed removal of MBOD members with a ballot of no confidence according to the approved process as identified in the Bylaws.
- 4) To ballot on the proposed removal of the president with a ballot of no confidence according to the approved process as identified in the Bylaws.

- 5) To ballot on any proposed amendments to the governing documents according to the process set forth in the Bylaws.

### **6.3 Removal of an Elder and Right of Appeal**

An elder may be removed from the ministry and have his credentials revoked for cause by the president and management team of Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., or, in areas outside the U.S., by the operation manager for the International Work. Any elder so removed may appeal to the MBOD. To appeal the removal, the elder must submit his appeal to the MBOD Chairman in writing within 21 days of removal.. Further procedures regarding such appeals shall be set forth in the Bylaws.

### **6.4 Rights of Church Members**

The Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., is first and foremost a group of congregations composed of Church members. Those who have undergone baptism, followed by the laying on of hands, by a recognized elder may be members of the Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc. As such, they have all the rights afforded to members of the Church. Those rights include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) The right to be treated in a respectful and loving manner by the pastor, elders and leadership of the local congregation.
- 2) The right to respectfully bring an accusation against an elder (with the accusation endorsed by two or more witnesses) to the local pastor with the expectation that the accusation will be sent to the operation manager for Ministerial Services for consideration. If the local pastor is the one being accused, the accusation must be submitted to the operation manager of Ministerial Services if the local pastor is in the U.S., or to the operation manager for the International Work if the local pastor is in an area outside the U.S.
- 3) The right to expect the local pastor to involve members in the active work of the local congregation in developing the family of God.
- 4) In the U.S., the right to appeal a pastor's disciplinary action of a Church member to the operation manager of Ministerial Services. Such an appeal must include notice to, and input from, the immediate supervisor of the pastor if the local pastor is in the U.S. In an area outside of the U.S., such an appeal must be made to the operation manager for the International Work. The operation manager of Ministerial Services, or the operation manager of the International Work, must investigate the appeal and report his findings to the president. The president will make the final decision on the appeal.

## **Article 7 – Amending Governing Documents**

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### **7.1 Process for Amendments**

Any elder of Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., may present a proposal for an amendment to the Corporation's Bylaws or Constitution to the MBOD at any

time. All recommendations will be considered by the MBOD and a decision made as to whether the amendment will be presented to all credential elders for consideration. Presentation of the proposal to the elders requires a majority ballot of the MBOD.

Proposed amendments can only be presented by the MBOD; but if a decision is made to present an amendment, it must be presented to all credential elders for their approval by way of the balloting process. Amending the Bylaws or Constitution requires two-thirds (2/3) of all elders balloting to ballot in the affirmative. The exception to the two-thirds majority will be amendments to the Fundamental Beliefs (included in this Constitution in Article 4), which will require an approval of three-fourths (3/4) of all elders balloting and must be presented to the elders by the Doctrine Committee unless the proposal originates with the Doctrine Committee. In such case of origin, the MBOD will be responsible for presenting the proposal to the elders.

Once it has been determined that an amendment will go forward to the elders for a ballot, that ballot shall take place within 30 days of the date such determination was made as recorded by the secretary of the Corporation.

## **7.2 Requirement for Legal Review**

Before being presented to the credentialed elders for approval, all amendments must be submitted for legal review to determine if there is any issue of legality regarding the outcome of such an amendment.