

1 **THE CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS**

2 **Of the**
3 **Eastern Regional Conference,**
4 **Churches of God, General Conference**

5
6 *Affirmed by the E PA & MD/VA Conferences in joint session*
7 *at Chambersburg on September 18, 1999*

8 *with final approval given at the sessions of each Conference in 2000*
9 *after constitution committee and legal review and approval by the General Conference*
10 *for implementation on January 1, 2001.*

11 *Amended by the Conference April 26-27, 2004; February 12, 2005; October 28, 2006; April 23-25, 2007 and*
12 *May 2-4, 2011.*

13 *Amended by the Conference April 18-20,, 2016*

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17 **CONSTITUTION - PREAMBLE**

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19 We, the Churches of God, General Conference in the eastern region of the United States,
20 established by the providence of Almighty God, in order to further the work of the Kingdom of
21 God in our midst, establish churches, provide for their welfare and carry on a cooperative ministry
22 for the benefit of all our members, do hereby ordain and establish the following Constitution and
23 By-laws.

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26 **ARTICLE I - NAME & AFFILIATION**

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28 The name of this body shall be “Eastern Regional Conference of the Churches of God, General
29 Conference,” a Pennsylvania not-for-profit corporation (hereafter referred to as the “Conference”).
30 It is a member Conference of the Churches of God, General Conference (Findlay, Ohio) and is
31 subject to the constitution and governance of the said General Conference.
32

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34 **ARTICLE II - MEMBERSHIP**

35
36 **Section 1. MINISTERIAL DELEGATES**

37 All ministers shall be members of the Conference. They shall be required to attend the regular
38 annual meeting and any special sessions of Conference unless officially excused.
39

40 **Section 2. LAY DELEGATES**

41 Each congregation recognized by the Conference as a member church shall annually choose two
42 laypersons from the first two hundred (200) members of its congregation to serve as delegates to
43 the Conference-in-Session. For each successive one hundred (100) members or major fraction
44 thereof, the congregation shall annually choose one additional layperson to serve. All such persons
45 selected to serve shall, except in the case of new or mission congregations, have been members of
46 the Churches of God, General Conference for at least three years.

47
48 Section 3. MEMBERS-AT-LARGE WITH VOTING PRIVILEGE
49 A. Any member of the Administrative Council who is not otherwise a member of the Conference
50 shall be a member-at-large.
51 B. The persons serving in the following Conference positions, if not otherwise members, shall be
52 members-at-large: Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and Transcribing Secretary.
53 C. The Presidents and secretaries of conference sanctioned auxiliaries and all commissioned
54 missionaries from this Conference shall be members-at-large.
55 D. Conference ministry staff persons as described in the By-laws (Article III) and employed by
56 the Administrative Council on a full or part-time basis if not otherwise members of the Conference,
57 shall be members-at-large.

58
59 Section 4. Non-voting persons may be requested by the Conference-in-Session to sit outside the
60 voting bar. Non-voting persons are not permitted to speak except when authorized by the Chair.

61
62 Section 5. Each pastoral charge shall be entitled to one person, between the ages of fourteen and
63 twenty-four years, as an advisory member (without vote) to the Conference-in-Session.

64
65 Section 6. Additional ministry staff persons from any pastoral charge may also serve as advisory
66 members (without vote) to the Conference-in-Session if they are not otherwise a member.

67
68 Section 7. VOTING PRIVILEGES
69 A. Every credentialed pastor of this Conference shall be entitled to vote in the sessions of
70 the Conference.
71 B. All officially registered lay delegates shall be entitled to vote. Lay delegates serve for a
72 period of one year, starting at the opening of the annual session of the Conference and continuing
73 to the beginning of the next annual session of the Conference, when all delegates are seated anew.
74 C. Advisory members of the Conference-in-Session are entitled to speak to the session, but
75 do not have voting privileges.
76 D. There shall be no right to vote by proxy.

77
78
79 ARTICLE III -- MEETINGS

80
81 Section 1. The Conference shall hold at least one regular annual meeting.

82
83 Section 2. The Administrative Council shall set the time and place of the annual meeting. The
84 Administrative Council may call special meetings and may change the time and place of the
85 meetings of the Conference-in-Session.

86
87 Section 3. *Robert's Rules of Order*, newly revised, shall be the parliamentary authority for the
88 Conference-in-Session and the Administrative Council and its commissions. Electronic or email
89 votes are acceptable for the Administrative Council and its commissions with the prior agreement
90 of that voting body.

91
92

93 ARTICLE IV -- OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES
94

95 The Conference-in-Session shall elect a Vice President and a Secretary, each for a two-year term.
96 The Vice President will succeed to the office of President upon the completion of the former
97 President's two-year term at the conclusion of that conference session. These officers shall be
98 responsible for a variety of duties, which shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

99 President: Will formally ordain the candidates to the ministry as approved in Article VII, Section
100 1, sign all certificates of license and ordination with the Executive Director, make appointments
101 necessary to expedite the business of the Conference, conduct all conference sessions and the
102 meetings of the Administrative Council. The President shall serve a two-year term.

103 Vice President: Will fulfill all duties assigned by the President, and conduct the duties of President
104 in the absence of the President.

105 Secretary: Will be responsible for recording minutes of all Administrative Council meetings,
106 oversee the recording of minutes at all conference sessions, be responsible for any correspondence
107 or documents presented to the Conference, conduct the roll call at conference sessions, prepare all
108 tally sheets for elections, and assist in the compilation of the Conference journal. There are no term
109 limitations placed on the office of Secretary.

110 In the absence of both the President and the Vice President, the Secretary shall be authorized to
111 fulfill the duties of the office of President until such time when the President or Vice President can
112 resume his duties or an appropriate election takes place.

113
114
115 ARTICLE V-- ORGANIZATION
116

117 Section 1. The Conference-in-Session shall be constituted at the first business session of the annual
118 meeting (and at the opening of any special meeting) by the President of the Conference. The
119 Parliamentarian(s) shall make the recommendation to the President on all questions regarding
120 eligibility and seating of delegates. The Administrative Council shall establish and prescribe rules,
121 regulations, and official forms, including the certification of delegates and alternates, to facilitate
122 and govern the recognition and seating of delegates and the constituting of the Conference-in-
123 Session.

124
125 Section 2. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

126 A. A Nominating Committee of five persons shall be composed of two members to be chosen by
127 the Administrative Council from its membership, and three members to be elected by the
128 Conference-in-Session, all serving one-year terms.

129 B. The Nominating Committee shall make nominations for each elective position in the
130 Conference, nominations for delegates to the General Conference, and nominations for the three
131 members of the Nominating Committee.

132 C. The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for ascertaining the eligibility and availability
133 of all nominees for the respective positions, and shall prepare a printed ballot for use by the
134 delegates at the conference sessions. At least one-third more names shall appear for each office
135 or position than the number to be elected, with the exception of Conference Secretary, Churches
136 of God Home Mission Council, Inc., and Doubling Gap Center, Inc. Blank spaces shall be provided
137 on the ballot for additional nominees.

138
139 Section 3. A majority of all votes shall be necessary for election except when electing General

140 Conference delegates, which may be done by plurality. On each successive ballot until such
141 majority ensues, nominees shall be dropped as follows: Persons receiving less than fifty votes on
142 the first ballot shall be dropped. On subsequent ballots the nominee with the fewest votes shall be
143 dropped. In the event that two or more persons are tied for the fewest votes, they shall be dropped
144 unless such action reduces the number of persons on the ballot below the number to be elected, in
145 which case no names will be dropped.

146
147 Section 4. All officers and Administrative Council members shall be chosen from the members
148 of the Conference-in-Session and/or the congregations of member churches in this Conference. To
149 be eligible in either case the nominees must have been members in good standing of the Churches
150 of God, General Conference for at least three years. (*In the election of an Executive Director see*
151 *By-laws Article III, Section 1.*)

152
153 Section 5. GENERAL CONFERENCE DELEGATES

154 A. Ministerial delegates to the General Conference as determined by the General Conference
155 constitution shall be elected from the members of this Conference who have been ordained
156 according to the standards of the General Conference and hold life ordination certificates for at
157 least three consecutive years.

158 B. Lay delegates to the General Conference as determined by the General Conference constitution
159 may be elected from the members of the Conference-in-Session or from the congregations of
160 member churches in this Conference. To be eligible in either case the nominees must be members
161 of said local Church of God for at least three consecutive years.

162 C. The Administrative Council shall present nominations for youth delegates to the General
163 Conference from any pastoral charge to the Nominating Committee.

164 D. All delegates shall be required to attend **all** the sessions of the General Conference. They shall
165 notify the Conference Secretary not later than thirty days before the convening of the General
166 Conference regarding their ability to do so.

167
168 Section 6. Vacancies in Conference offices shall be filled by the Administrative Council.

169 A. Upon a vacancy in the office of President, the Vice President shall assume the office. Any
170 vacancy in the office of Vice President may be filled on an interim basis until the Conference-in-
171 Session can act at its next regular or special meeting to fill the remaining Vice Presidential term.

172 B. A vacancy shall exist when the Administrative Council officially declares such vacancy due to
173 death, resignation in writing, habitual negligence of duty, or any other justifiable cause.

174 D. Membership on the Administrative Council is a Conference office within the meaning of this
175 section.

176 E. Vacancies on the Administrative Council shall be filled by a majority vote of the remaining
177 members of the Administrative Council.

178 F. Vacancies filled by the Administrative Council shall be for the duration of the term with the
179 exception of the office of Vice President.

180

181 ARTICLE VI -- ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

182

183 Section 1. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

184 A. The Administrative Council will be composed of eleven (11) members elected by the
185 Conference-in-Session as follows: four (4) ordained pastors of the Conference; four (4) lay persons

186 (Lay persons must be members of a local Church of God in the Conference for at least three years.);
187 the President of the Conference; the Vice President of the Conference; and the Secretary of the
188 Conference. The Executive Director and two (2) additional members at large selected by the
189 Administrative Council from the Conference shall also serve as voting members of the
190 Administrative Council.

191 B. Administrative Council members with the exception of the Executive Director will serve a
192 two-year term. The Vice President shall be elected in even numbered years and the Secretary in
193 odd numbered years. In addition two ordained pastors and two laypersons shall be elected
194 annually. The Administrative Council shall also appoint one member-at-large each year.

195 C. Persons elected or appointed to the Administrative Council will be limited to serving two terms
196 in succession with the exception of the Executive Director and the Secretary. In the case of persons
197 appointed to complete the unfinished term of another, if less than one year remains in the un-
198 finished term it will not count as a term for the purpose of the previous rule. If more than one year
199 remains, however, it shall count as a full term.

200

201 Section 2. AUTHORITY

202 A. The Administrative Council shall be the corporation of the Conference and shall constitute the
203 Board of Trustees of the corporation.

204 B. The Administrative Council under this constitution shall be the successor to both the
205 Administrative Council and the Executive Committee of the previous constitutions.

206 C. The Administrative Council shall have authority over the work of the Conference between the
207 annual sessions of the Conference.

208 D. The Administrative Council shall have authority over the appointment and work of all
209 commissions, committees, organizations, and employees of the Conference. It shall meet as often
210 as necessary to oversee the work of the Conference.

211 E. The Administrative Council shall be vested with judicial power in all cases under the
212 constitution not otherwise provided for and it shall be responsible for making final decisions on
213 recall of ordination certificates.

214 F. The Administrative Council shall have the right to name qualified delegates to the General
215 Conference if and when the list of officially elected alternates has been exhausted.

216 G. The Administrative Council has the authority to appoint and dissolve any special committees
217 it deems necessary.

218 H. The Administrative Council has the authority to employ persons as needed and to terminate
219 such employment following procedures established in the employment agreements or Conference
220 By-laws. If no such procedures have been adopted, the Administrative Council may terminate
221 employment at any time for any reason. All employees of the Conference are accountable to the
222 Administrative Council for the performance of their duties. All employees of the Conference,
223 except in secretarial positions, must be members of a local congregation of the Churches of God,
224 General Conference.

225 I. The Administrative Council shall have the authority to resolve any issue or question of
226 interpretation regarding the constitution, By-laws, or any other conference policy.

227

228 Section 3. RESPONSIBILITIES

229 A. The Administrative Council shall appoint commissions, which shall carry out the program and
230 ministry of the Conference. Each commission must be made up of at least five (5) members, two
231 (2) of whom should have been present at the most recent sessions of annual conference, and one

232 member of the Administrative Council who shall serve with voting privileges as a liaison between
233 the commission and the Administrative Council. Each commission will have a staff person relating
234 directly to its work. The staff person will not be the chairperson of the commission, and will be
235 accountable to the Administrative Council.

236 B. The Administrative Council shall annually name the chairperson for each commission. Persons
237 who are appointed to commissions as members will serve a two-year term. There is no limit on
238 terms of service for commission work.

239 C. The Administrative Council shall annually appoint a constitution committee of at least three
240 persons and designate a chairperson. The Executive Director shall also serve as a member of this
241 committee.

242 D. The Administrative Council shall appoint a program committee for the annual sessions of
243 Conference.

244 E. The Administrative Council will appoint a Transcribing Secretary for the Conference for terms
245 of three years. There is no limit on the number of terms that may be served. The Transcribing
246 Secretary shall take minutes of the annual sessions of the Conference and assist the Conference
247 Secretary in preparing the Conference journal, as required by the Administrative Council.

248 F. The Administrative Council will annually appoint the Standing Committee. The
249 Standing Committee will consist of five persons: ERC Executive Director, ERC President, ERC
250 Vice-President, Chairperson, Church and Pastor Commission, and Chairperson, Church Vocations
251 Commission. The purpose of the Standing Committee is to act on behalf of the ERC
252 Administrative Council in dealing with issues of pastoral insubordination, heresy, Conference
253 disassociation or discussion thereof, pastoral morality and integrity, and any issues that are divisive
254 or create disharmony in the local church or the Eastern Regional Conference. It will be at the Ad
255 Council's discretion or the discretion of the Executive Director when an issue needs to go before
256 the standing committee. The Standing Committee reserves the right to suspend credentials if
257 necessary without receiving approval beyond the Committee. The Standing Committee has no
258 authority on its own with the exception of suspending ministerial credentials but can make
259 recommendations for action to ERC Commission and/or the Administrative Council. The
260 Standing Committee will meet on an as needed-basis and will be chaired by
261 the President of the Conference.

262 G. The financial records shall be routinely reviewed as part of the overall Conference fiscal
263 procedures. The said review shall be presented at the annual Conference sessions.

264
265

266 ARTICLE VII -- COMMISSIONS

267

268 Section 1. THE COMMISSION ON CHURCH VOCATIONS

269 A. The mission of this commission shall be to: 1) encourage persons to respond to God's call to
270 church vocations; 2) help churches encourage and support persons sensing God's call; 3) counsel
271 persons sensing God's call and guide them through the appropriate educational programs; 4)
272 evaluate persons for readiness for ministry; 5) recommend persons for credentials; and 6) set rules
273 for and grant financial aid to persons under its care.

274 B. Credentials for pastoral ministry include provisional license, annual license, and life ordination
275 and shall be issued in accordance with General Conference standards. If no General Conference
276 standards exist, the commission shall have the authority to recommend credentials and appropriate
277 standards and guidelines to the Administrative Council for approval. Modifications to General

278 Conference standards must be approved by the Administrative Council and the General
279 Conference.

280 C. Credentials for non-pastoral church vocations shall be issued in accordance with existing
281 General Conference standards. If no General Conference standards exist, the commission shall
282 have the authority to recommend credentials and appropriate standards and guidelines to the
283 Administrative Council for approval.

284 D. The Commission reserves the right to grant to another ERC Commission or an ERC
285 pastor/elder team the authority to issue a provisional license to those called and equipped for
286 ministry in the local church. The Commission reserves the right to withdraw such authority at any
287 time. Pastors licensed as the local church level are accountable to the authority that granted the
288 license as well as the Commission on Church Vocations. Candidates for such licenses must meet
289 the General Conference Ministerial standads in regards to character, competency, and calling.
290 Provisional license and annual license may be granted immediately by the commission subject to
291 confirmation by the Administrative Council. Ordination may be issued only upon approval by both
292 the Administrative Council and Conference-in-Session.

293 E. The commission shall recommend candidates for provisional license, annual license, or
294 ordination to the Administrative Council. Upon the approval of the Administrative Council, the
295 commission shall present the names of candidates to the Conference-in-Session for final
296 confirmation. Provisional license, annual license, and ordination shall be conferred in a special
297 service during the annual sessions of Conference. The commission shall plan and lead this service.

298 F. Candidates for permanent license and ordination must be able to respond affirmatively to the
299 following questions, which shall be asked during the annual ordination service:

- 300
- 301 1. Do you believe that in seeking the office of the Christian ministry you are influenced
302 by a sincere love for God and your desire to promote His glory and the salvation of men?
 - 303 2. Do you believe that the doctrines of the Word of God as taught by the Churches of God,
304 General Conference are correct and true?
 - 305 3. Are you willing to subscribe to these doctrines, to teach them, and to defend them against
306 every attempt to minimize their value, guarding against those things which cause division
307 in the church, and dedicating your powers to building the church you serve as pastor?
 - 308 4. Do you promise to fully cooperate and carry out all the rules and regulations, and support
309 all the agencies and enterprises of the Conference and the General Conference?
 - 310 5. If for any cause the Conference should deem it proper to recall your certificate of
311 ordination, do you promise to deliver the same upon official request?
 - 312 6. Should you determine that you can no longer publicly affirm the doctrines of the
313 Churches of God or fully adhere to the authority of the Churches of God, will you
314 voluntarily surrender your credentials and resign your pastorate?

315

316 G. Transfers of credentials from other Conferences of the Churches of God must be approved by
317 the commission before appointment and confirmed by the Administrative Council.

318 H. Persons who have lost, surrendered or had recalled ministerial credentials from this Conference
319 and who desire to have their credentials reinstated must apply to the commission. The commission
320 shall have the authority to set conditions and requirements for reinstatement, and to set time periods
321 for such conditions to be met. A vote to recommend the reinstatement of credentials must be
322 unanimous. This vote is subject to confirmation by both the Administrative Council and the
323 Conference-in-Session. Persons approved for reinstatement of credentials for pastoral ministry

324 must serve a three-year provisional period with license before permanent credentials may be
325 conferred. The provisional period shall begin with the date of appointment to a pastoral charge or
326 approved ministry.

327 I. At least half the members of the commission must be ministers of this Conference holding
328 ordination not less than three years.

329 J. The commission shall have the authority to set guidelines and policies to further define and
330 execute its mission, subject to approval by the Administrative Council.

331

332 Section 2. THE COMMISSION ON CHURCH AND PASTOR

333 A. The mission of this commission shall be to 1) appoint pastors to local churches and receive
334 and act on pastoral resignations; 2) give direction and guidance to local churches; 3) give direction
335 and guidance to pastors and help them in times of special need; 4) encourage healthy relationships
336 between pastors and the churches they serve and facilitate successful pastorates; 5) encourage
337 and support healthy relationships between pastors and their families; 6) facilitate reconciliation in
338 cases of conflict within churches or between churches and pastors, arbitrating complaints when
339 well founded and received in writing; 7) set parish boundaries; 8) set pastoral salary and benefit
340 standards; 9) approve the transfer of ministerial credentials to other conferences of the Churches
341 of God or other denominations, or deny such approval; 10) intervene in the life of a local church
342 or in the ministry of a pastor when necessary to protect the integrity and order of the Church; 11)
343 encourage continuing education for pastors; 12) set rules for and grant supplemental salary aid and
344 other financial assistance to local churches and pastors; and 13) oversee changes in pastoral status.

345 B. Persons seeking pastoral appointment and churches seeking pastors must follow the guidelines
346 set by the commission. The basic policy is: 1) persons seeking appointment must apply to the
347 commission and may not contact churches directly; 2) churches seeking pastors may deal only
348 with candidates given to them or approved by the commission, and may not contact candidates
349 without commission approval; 3) a church may negotiate with only one candidate at a time and a
350 candidate may negotiate with only one church at a time; and 4) final appointment must be made
351 by the commission.

352 C. Normally, the commission will appoint pastors to churches only if both the pastor and church
353 agree. However, the commission shall always have the authority to appoint pastors as well as
354 remove pastors solely on its own authority when necessary to protect the integrity and order of the
355 Church.

356 D. Pastors considering resignation and churches desiring a pastoral change shall contact the
357 commission and shall follow guidelines set by the commission.

358 E. The commission shall counsel and direct pastors in the process of retirement.

359 F. All persons holding credentials issued by this Conference shall be subject to the direction and
360 discipline of the commission, and shall meet with the commission whenever required. The
361 commission shall have the authority to recommend disciplinary measures to the Administrative
362 Council. The commission shall have the authority to immediately suspend credentials in an
363 emergency, subject to confirmation by the Administrative Council.

364 G. The commission shall have the authority to approve or deny changes in pastoral status,
365 including: 1) active or inactive; 2) leave of absence; 3) sabbatical leave; and 4) approved ministry.
366 The commission shall regularly review the list of pastors on inactive status and make
367 recommendations as appropriate for the termination of credentials to the Administrative Council
368 and to the Conference-in-Session.

369 H. The commission shall have the authority to set guidelines and policies to further define and

370 execute its mission, subject to approval by the Administrative Council.

371

372 Section 3. THE COMMISSION ON CHURCH PLANTING

373 A. The mission of this commission shall be to: 1) plant new Churches of God within the
374 boundaries of this Conference; 2) recommend persons to the Commission On Church and Pastor
375 for appointment as pastors of mission churches; 3) oversee the life and work of mission churches;
376 4) set standards and rules, and oversee the work of mission pastors; 5) set rules for and administer
377 financial assistance for mission churches, and mission pastors; 6) encourage and assist local
378 churches in mothering new churches; and 7) challenge the churches of the Conference to have a
379 vision for and give support to church planting.

380 B. The commission shall set guidelines and policies regarding church planting, the organization
381 and work of mission churches, and the work of mission pastors, subject to approval by the
382 Administrative Council.

383 C. Pastors and lay church planters serving mission churches shall be accountable to both this
384 commission and the Commission on Church and Pastor. This commission has the authority to
385 immediately remove a pastor or lay church planter from a mission assignment, subject to
386 confirmation by the Administrative Council.

387 D. This commission shall have the authority to recommend the closing of a mission church and
388 the authority to immediately suspend all programs of a mission church in an emergency, both
389 subject to confirmation by the Administrative Council.

390 E. All proposed church plants must be approved by the commission and shall be subject to the
391 rules and guidelines in effect. New churches may not be started without the approval of this
392 commission and the Administrative Council.

393 F. Persons who hold an active Church Planter's Certificate may be considered for assignment to
394 mission churches in place of persons holding credentials for pastoral ministry.

395 Church planters will minister under rules and guidelines set by the Conference, and shall be
396 accountable to this commission in the performance of their duties. This commission shall provide
397 regular oversight, support, and continuing education for persons serving as church planters in
398 mission churches.

399 G. The commission shall have the authority to set guidelines and policies to further define
400 and execute its mission, subject to approval by the Administrative Council.

401

402 Section 4. THE COMMISSION ON CHURCH RENEWAL

403 A. The mission of this commission shall be to: 1) provide programs for and oversee
404 the renewal and revitalization of existing churches; 2) administer financial assistance for churches
405 in renewal and/or revitalization; 3) provide counsel to pastors and congregations contemplating or
406 undergoing renewal and/or revitalization; 4) give direction to churches considering building
407 projects or the sale or purchase of real estate.

408 B. The commission shall set guidelines and policies regarding church renewal and
409 revitalization subject to approval by the Administrative Council.

410 C. Pastors serving churches in the renewal and/or revitalization process shall be accountable
411 to this commission. This commission shall have authority to recommend a change of pastor to the
412 Commission on Church and Pastor.

413 D. The commission shall have the authority to recommend the closing of a church when
414 renewal/revitalization attempts prove fruitless, subject to approval by the Administrative Council.

415 E. The commission shall have the authority to suspend all programs of a church in the renewal
416 /revitalization process and to restructure the local church leadership as needed, subject to approval
417 by the Administrative Council.

418 F. The commission shall serve as a resource for churches considering new construction or
419 renovation of any existing building/grounds. Commission approval is required for new
420 construction, renovation projects, the leasing of building and grounds, and the sale or transfer of
421 control of any church building, parsonage or real estate held by or for the benefit of a local church
422 as a member of the Conference and subject to the Constitution thereof. Local church property is
423 held in trust for the Conference as set forth in Article X, section 5 of this constitution. The
424 existence of this trust, however, shall in no way limit the power and authority, otherwise existing
425 over such property, of the particular church so long as it remains a part of and subject to this
426 Conference. This commission shall set guidelines and rules in this area, subject to approval by the
427 Administrative Council.

428 G. The commission shall appoint one trustee annually for a one-year term to serve on the
429 board of trustees of the Churches of God Home Mission Council, Inc.

430 H. The commission must receive and review all loan applications from the churches for the
431 purchase of land and/or buildings, new construction or renovation, etc. The Commission shall
432 process such applications and forward them, if approved, to the Home Mission Council for action.

433 I. In cooperation with the Commission on Church and Pastor, the commission shall provide
434 intentional interim ministry. The Commission on Renewal shall be responsible for the training,
435 recommendation, and follow-up (coaching) of intentional interim pastors. The Commission on
436 Church and Pastor shall be responsible for the appointing of intentional interims and determining
437 the length of the appointment.

438 J. The commission shall have the authority to set guidelines and policies to further define
439 and execute its mission, subject to approval by the Administrative Council.

440
441 Section 5. THE COMMISSION ON DISCIPLESHIP

442 A. The mission of this commission shall be to: 1) help churches be more effective at nurturing
443 discipleship and mature faith; 2) work with churches to identify and develop small group leaders
444 and mentors; 3) identify, recruit and train persons to serve as resource persons and leaders in the
445 areas of education and discipleship; 4) assist churches in planning curriculum, improving Sunday
446 School and small group ministries, and other areas pertinent to Christian education and
447 discipleship; and 5) provide resources, workshops and programs in the area of its mission.

448 B. The commission shall annually appoint one person to serve a one-year term on the board of
449 directors of Doubling Gap Center, Inc.

450 C. The commission shall have the authority to set guidelines and policies to further define and
451 execute its mission, subject to approval by the Administrative Council.

452
453 Section 6. THE COMMISSION ON EVANGELISM

454 A. The mission of this commission shall be to: 1) enable churches to be more effective at sharing

455 the gospel of Jesus Christ; 2) aid churches in understanding and implementing church growth
456 principles; 3) work with churches to identify and develop leaders with the gift of evangelism; 4)
457 identify, recruit and train persons to serve as resource persons and leaders in the areas of
458 evangelism and church growth; 5) provide resources, workshops and programs in the area of its
459 mission.

460 B. The commission shall have the authority to set guidelines and policies to further define and
461 execute its mission, subject to approval by the Administrative Council.

462

463 Section 7. THE COMMISSION ON LEADERSHIP

464 A. The mission of this commission shall be to facilitate leadership development across the
465 conference and in the local church among pastors and people by: 1) identifying Spirit-led and
466 gifted leaders, 2) encouraging emerging leaders, 3) offering appropriate training and mentoring
467 opportunities and 4) helping to establish effective systems of leadership accountability.

468 B. The commission shall have the authority to set guidelines and policies to further define and
469 execute its mission, subject to approval by the Administrative Council.

470

471 Section 8. THE COMMISSION ON MISSIONS

472 A. The mission of this commission shall be to: 1) raise cross cultural mission awareness and
473 involvement across the Conference; 2) assist district and local church mission organizations; 3)
474 encourage opportunities for “hands-on” mission service; 4) facilitate the raising and distribution
475 of funds and other resources for missions, disaster relief, or other special needs; and 5) work
476 together with the General Conference in promoting worldwide mission endeavors.

477 B. The commission shall have the authority to set guidelines and policies to further define and
478 execute its mission, subject to approval by the Administrative Council.

479

480 Section 9. THE COMMISSION ON STEWARDSHIP

481 A. The mission of this commission shall be to: 1) encourage faithful stewardship by the
482 Conference, local churches and individual believers; 2) oversee the financial operations of the
483 Conference; 3) annually establish the Conference budget, subject to approval by the
484 Administrative Council; 4) develop programs for stewardship education; 5) respond to requests
485 for fund-raising projects and financial appeals directed to the churches of the Conference; 6)
486 oversee the business operations of the Conference; 7) advise pastors and churches on financial
487 matters including taxes, insurance, stewardship development, and budget building; 8) see that
488 appropriate procedures for financial accountability are in place and that Conference financial
489 records are properly reviewed and in order each year; and 9) take any immediate actions needed
490 to protect the financial integrity and reputation of the Conference, subject to confirmation by the
491 Administrative Council.

492 B. This commission shall prepare the Conference budget. Each commission shall submit a
493 proposed budget for its area of ministry as a first step in the budget process. Deadlines for
494 commission budgets shall be set by this commission. The budget must be approved by the
495 Administrative Council.

496 C. All requests for special financial appeals and fund-raising projects directed to the churches of
497 the Conference must be submitted to the commission. The commission shall review all such
498 requests and recommend appropriate action to the Administrative Council. The commission shall
499 have the authority to take immediate action against unapproved solicitations when necessary for
500 the order of the Church, subject to confirmation by the Administrative Council.

- 501 D. The commission shall oversee the work of the endowment committee and the investment and
502 loan portfolio of the Conference and recommend changes as needed to the Administrative Council.
503 E. The Conference Treasurer and assistant, as well as the Conference Financial Secretary and
504 assistant shall be members of this commission by virtue of office and are not subject to term limits
505 under Article VI, Section 3, paragraph E of this constitution.
506 F. The commission shall have the authority to set guidelines and policies to further define and
507 execute its mission, subject to approval by the Administrative Council.

508
509 **ARTICLE VIII--AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS**
510

511 The auxiliary lay organizations, defined in the Conference By-laws and any others which may be
512 established, shall be in harmony with the Charter, Constitution, and By-laws of the Conference.
513 The Conference shall foster, encourage, and support the lay organizations of the Conference.
514 Auxiliary organizations must be chartered by vote of the Conference in annual session upon the
515 recommendation of the Administrative Council. Such charters may be suspended immediately by
516 the Administrative Council if necessary for the good of the Conference. Charters may be revoked
517 by Conference-in-Session upon recommendation of the Administrative Council. The constitutions
518 of all auxiliary organizations, as well as any amendments to such constitutions, must be approved
519 by the Administrative Council. All auxiliary organizations shall be subject to the Administrative
520 Council and the Conference in all areas, and shall report regularly to the Administrative Council
521 and to Conference-in-Session. All records and minutes of the auxiliary organizations are subject
522 to review and approval by the Administrative Council. The names and basic guidelines for each
523 auxiliary organization shall be included in the By-laws.
524

525
526 **ARTICLE IX -- SUBSIDIARY CORPORATIONS**
527

528 The following corporations and any adjunct corporations thereof are subsidiary corporations of
529 this Conference of the Churches of God, General Conference: Doubling Gap Center, Inc. and the
530 Churches of God Home Mission Council, Inc. They shall report to each Administrative Council
531 meeting and to the Conference-in-Session in writing or by personal representative. All records and
532 minutes of these corporations are subject to review and approval by the Administrative Council.
533

534
535 **ARTICLE X --POLITY**
536

- 537 Section 1. The Conference has power to:
- 538 A. Receive and issue appeals from the Administrative Councils (church councils) of local
539 churches, and to examine and approve or censure the records and actions of said councils.
 - 540 B. Condemn erroneous opinions, which injure the peace of the Church.
 - 541 C. Visit particular churches for the purpose of inquiring into their spiritual condition.
 - 542 D. Examine and license candidates for the ministry.
 - 543 E. Ordain, install, judge and remove ministers.
 - 544 F. Resolve questions of doctrine and discipline.
 - 545 G. Unite or divide congregations.
 - 546 H. Form or receive new congregations.

547 I. Dissolve congregations or close churches.
548 J. Order in general whatever pertains to the spiritual and material welfare of the churches
549 under its care.
550

551 Section 2. MEMBER CHURCHES

552 A. Any group of thirty or more believers united together as a religious body or church, subscribing
553 to the polity, principles and doctrines of the Conference and the General Conference, and adopting
554 its own constitution as approved by the Conference shall, upon request to and approval by the
555 Conference, be received as a member Church of God in full standing in the Conference. The
556 church shall be entitled to all the privileges granted by the Constitution, including representation
557 in the Conference and the service of a minister of this Conference. All mission churches
558 established under the auspices of the Conference are considered member churches.

559 B. Any pre-existing group of believers united together as a religious body or church
560 willing to support the polity, principles and doctrines of the Conference and the General
561 Conference shall, upon request to and approval by the Administrative Council, be received as an
562 associate member congregation in the Conference. The church shall be entitled to the privileges
563 granted by the constitution with the exception of voting at Conference-in-Session. Members of an
564 associated church body are not eligible for election to Conference offices. The church may be
565 served by a minister of the Conference. Associate membership may continue for ten years during
566 which time a request for membership in full standing needs to be made or this status will be
567 discontinued.
568

569 Section 3. The policies and guidelines of the General Conference shall govern membership and
570 other aspects of local church administration.
571

572 Section 4. An appeal from an action of the Administrative Council (church council) of a local
573 church in matters of discipline and other difficulties can be made, provided such appeal is made to
574 the Administrative Council of the Conference within thirty days after the judgment has been
575 rendered by the Administrative Council (church council) of a local church.
576

577 Section 5. CHURCH PROPERTY

578 A. The property of member congregations in full standing in the Conference is subject
579 to the laws of this larger ecclesiastical body, i.e. the Conference, and in turn to the rule of the
580 General Conference. This three-tiered hierarchical structure represents a representative form of
581 government with delegates from all the churches constituting the Conference-in-Session. This
582 presbyterial polity is further translated and confirmed below.

583 B. All church property shall be held by the elders or trustees of the local church or by
584 the local church corporation if such there be, in trust for the Conference. The existence of this
585 trust, however, shall in no way limit the power and authority, otherwise existing over such
586 property, so long as the local church remains a part of and subject to this Conference. (Also, see
587 the General Conference Constitution, Article XII, Section 3 and Article XIX).

588 C. In the event a church shall become extinct or cease to maintain an organization in
589 harmony with the doctrine, customs, or polity of the Churches of God, its property shall become
590 the property of the Conference.

591 D. In the case of extinction by reason of the dispersal of its members, the abandonment
592 of its work, or other cause, a local church may provide for the disposal of its assets to appropriate
593 ministries and/or agencies of this Conference and/or the General Conference.

594 E. When a church ceases to be in harmony with the doctrines, customs or polity of the
595 Churches of God, this Conference may at its discretion dissolve that church. An appeal of such a
596 decree of dissolution may be taken within thirty-days to the Administrative Council of the General
597 Conference. Whenever a church is formally dissolved by this Conference such property as it may
598 have shall become the property of this Conference and shall be used for such purposes or may be
599 sold or disposed of as this Conference may direct.

600 F. Should a congregation desire to withdraw from the Churches of God, General
601 Conference for whatever reason, the current General Conference policy on church withdrawal
602 must be followed.

603

604 Section 6. CONFERENCE PROPERTY

605 A. As a member Conference of the Churches of God, General Conference, all property
606 of the Eastern Regional Conference and its subsidiary corporations is and shall be subject to the
607 rule of the General Conference. All such property is held in trust by the Conference for the General
608 Conference. The existence of this trust, however, shall in no way limit the power and authority,
609 otherwise existing over such property, so long as the Conference remains a part of and subject to
610 the General Conference.

611 B. In the event of dissolution of the Conference, the Administrative Council shall, after
612 paying or making provision for the payment of all liabilities of the corporation, dispose of all
613 remaining assets under the provisions of Section 501 (c.3.) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986,
614 to be used exclusively for charitable purposes.

615 C. Under no circumstances shall any assets be distributed upon dissolution to any
616 directors, officers, employees, or individual or group of individuals of the corporation.

617 D. Nothing herein shall be construed to affect the disposition of property and assets
618 held by the Conference in trust or under any other condition or subject to any executory or special
619 limitation. Any such property upon dissolution of the Conference shall be transferred in
620 accordance with the trust, condition or limitation imposed thereon.

621

622 Section 7. NO ACTIVITIES VIOLATING INTERNAL REVENUE CODE

623 A. The Conference is organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes. No
624 part of the net earnings of the Conference shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its
625 officers or other private persons, except that the Conference shall be authorized and empowered
626 to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in
627 furtherance of the purposes set forth in this constitution.

628 B. The Conference does not, and shall not, carry on any other activities not permitted
629 to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under section 501 (c.3.) of
630 the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or (b) by
631 a corporation, contributing to activities which are deductible under section 170 (c.2.) of the Internal
632 Revenue Code or the corresponding provision of any future federal tax code.

633

634

635

636 ARTICLE XI -- MINISTERS

637

638 Section 1. Original jurisdiction in relation to ministers belongs to the Conference.

639

Section 2. The church membership and responsibilities of the minister shall be in accord with

640 General Conference policies and guidelines. The pastor shall be in charge of all worship services
641 and ceremonies conducted in the Church, unless otherwise mutually agreed. The senior pastor/lead
642 pastor shall be responsible for whoever occupies the pulpit.

643
644 Section 3. Any minister belonging to the Conference who refuses to carry out an order or
645 resolution thereof shall be liable to a charge of insubordination before the Conference.

646
647 Section 4. Procedures for resolving controversies shall be in accord with Eastern Regional
648 Conference and General Conference policies and guidelines.

649

650

651 **ARTICLE XII -- CONSTRUCTION**

652

653 Section 1. This document shall be interpreted in accordance with Pennsylvania law.

654

655 Section 2. In this document the word he is intended to refer to he or she.

656

657

658 **ARTICLE XIII -- AMENDMENTS**

659

660 Section 1. Any amendment or revision to the Constitution shall be referred without debate to the
661 Committee on Constitution for study, and the Committee shall present its report and
662 recommendations at a subsequent meeting of the Conference-in-Session.

663

664 Section 2. This Constitution may be altered or amended by a two-thirds vote of a quorum of
665 Conference-in-Session. A quorum is the majority of the number of delegates officially registered
666 for the annual session of the Conference. All members shall be required to vote, unless properly
667 excused for good and sufficient reason.

668

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I -- MEETINGS

The regular annual meeting of the Conference shall be held during the second quarter of the calendar year at such a place as may be agreed upon from time to time, for the transaction of such business as properly pertains to ecclesiastical bodies.

ARTICLE II -- AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

Section 1. THE CHURCHES OF GOD WOMEN'S MINISTRIES (CGWM)

A. The CGWM shall further the work of the Churches of God by uniting the women of the Churches of God in spiritual fellowship, with a program of evangelism, prayer, education, giving and service.

B. It shall effect its own organization, elect officers, and conduct its affairs as provided in its Constitution. The President and Secretary shall be members-at-large of the annual Conference-in-Session to which they shall report. The President and Secretary shall be advisory members of the Administrative Council to which they shall report at least twice a year.

C. The Conference CGWM shall maintain a close relationship with the General Conference CGWM and relate to interdenominational women's work.

Section 2. THE CHURCHES OF GOD ADULT LIFE FELLOWSHIP

A. The ALF shall further the work of the Kingdom of God by uniting the senior adults of the Churches of God in this Conference in a program of worship, fellowship, and service.

B. It shall effect its own organization, elect officers, and conduct its affairs as provided for in its constitution. The President and Secretary shall be members-at-large of the annual Conference to which they shall report. The President and Secretary shall be advisory members of the Administrative Council to which they shall report at least twice a year.

C. The Conference ASLF shall maintain a close relationship with the General Conference CGSLF and relate to interdenominational senior life work.

ARTICLE III -- STAFF POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

Section 1. The executive director shall be selected by the Administrative Council for a four (4) year term. There is no limit on terms to be served.

A. The qualifications for the executive director are that he shall be one who:

1. Has proven to be a faithful ordained servant in the Churches of God, General Conference in an area of ministry as defined by the General Conference for a minimum of ten years, with five of those years having been spent as an ordained pastor in the local church;
2. Has demonstrated administrative skills in the church;
3. Has served as an elected or ex-officio member of the Administrative Council in any Conference or the General Conference.

- 714 B. When a vacancy occurs in the office of the executive director for any reason
715 1. The Administrative Council shall appoint a search committee of at least three people
716 to find a replacement candidate to be presented to the Administrative Council for
717 approval.
718 2. The Administrative Council shall appoint an interim executive director to serve a
719 period not to exceed eighteen (18) months until the new candidate is selected.
- 720 C. The executive director shall, by virtue of his office, be a delegate to the General Conference and the
721 chairman of the Conference delegation.
- 722 D. The responsibilities of the executive director shall include, but not be limited to:
- 723 1. Overseeing leadership development in the Conference by:
- 724 a. Modeling an effective, scriptural, and exemplary personal leadership
725 style;
 - 726 b. Providing training in goal setting and vision casting to local
727 congregations;
 - 728 c. Providing leadership training to pastors, elders, deacons and other
729 leadership positions in local congregations;
 - 730 d. Developing a network of pastors and lay persons who demonstrate good
731 leadership skills to provide training for local congregations;
 - 732 e. Encouraging local churches to emphasize the need to develop and train
733 youth and young adults for leadership positions.
- 734 2. Giving vision and direction to the Conference by:
- 735 a. Spending time regularly seeking God's will through Bible study and
736 prayer;
 - 737 b. Exhibiting an understanding of, and the ability to, implement the
738 Conference's mission statement and strategic goals;
 - 739 c. Leading the Conference in periodic review of the mission statement and
740 strategic goals;
 - 741 d. Keeping abreast of research in vision casting, as well as contemporary
742 and future culture.
- 743 3. Directing the Conference ministry and support staff on a daily basis by:
- 744 a. Overseeing the ongoing administrative responsibilities of the
745 Conference;
 - 746 b. Working with the Administrative Council in the search for, hiring of,
747 evaluation of, discipline of, and termination of Conference ministry and
748 support staff;
 - 749 c. Developing the ministry and support staff into a leadership team;
 - 750 d. Providing pastoral support for the Conference ministry and support
751 staff.
 - 752 e. Determining which Commissions staff persons will regularly meet with
753 based on current staff structure.
- 754 4. Acting as spokesperson and representative of the Conference by:
- 755 a. Serving as an officer of the Conference with authority to act in polity,
756 financial, legal and disciplinary matters;
 - 757 b. Serving as signatory on behalf of the Conference for all legal
758 documents, including but not limited to deeds, mortgages and bonds.

- 759 c. Serving as a representative of the Conference to the larger church
- 760 community;
- 761 d. Serving as a spokesperson for the Conference to the larger church
- 762 community and the community-at-large.
- 763 E. The executive director shall have authority to speak for the Conference, the Administrative Council,
- 764 commissions and committees thereof on matters of record.
- 765 F. The executive director shall be the legal officer of the Conference, and shall be the custodian of the
- 766 charter, seal, deeds, Conference archives, and pastoral transfers. He shall provide, sign, seal and deliver
- 767 all certificates of ordination, annual license, Christian service, and retirement, and annual identification
- 768 cards for pastors.
- 769 G. The executive director will serve as a member of the commissions on Church Vocations, Leadership
- 770 and Missions. He may serve as an ex-officio member of all commissions, committees or task forces of the
- 771 Administrative Council where not already serving as a member.
- 772 H. Annual evaluation of the executive director should be conducted by the Administrative Council (or by
- 773 an appointed Staff Committee from within the Administrative Council). Each staff person will also be
- 774 annually evaluated, such evaluations being led by the executive director, who serves as the chief of staff.
- 775
- 776

777 Section 6. GUIDING ACTIONS CONCERNING STAFF/STAFFING

778 A. All positions with the exception of the Executive Director will be implemented at the direction

779 of the Eastern Regional Conference as funds become available.

780 B. All job descriptions for all positions except for Executive Director will be maintained in an

781 Office Policy and Personnel Manual.

782

783

784 ARTICLE IV -- AMENDMENTS

785

786 Section 1. Any amendment or revision to the By-laws shall be referred without debate to the

787 Committee on Constitution for study, and the Committee shall present its report and

788 recommendations at a subsequent meeting of the Conference-in-Session.

789

790 Section 2. These By-laws may be altered or amended by a two-thirds vote of a quorum of

791 the Conference-in-Session. A quorum is the majority of the number of delegates officially

792 registered for the annual session of the Conference. All members shall be required to vote, unless

793 properly excused for good and sufficient reason.