Ministerial Activation

RECOMMENDATION:

Pages 109-110, S29. INSTRUCTIONS FOR MINISTERS, I. General Instructions for Ministers

We recommend:

> **That we amend page 110, S29. INSTRUCTIONS FOR MINISTERS, I. General Instructions for Ministers,** by adding paragraph 12,

So as to read:

12. A ministry profile "portal" will be created and maintained by the Church of God, upon which each credential minister must create and maintain a personal profile page, providing a ministry resume and including information about ministry training that they either received or conducted, with yearly updates of such, with the purpose of such profile being used by Administrative Bishops in the pastoral placement process and by the Executive Committee during consideration of ministerial appointments.

PAGE 32 Item B /Item II Ordinances of the Church

Lord's Supper (Communion) and Feet Washing

Whereas this sacrament is foundational to the doctrine of the Church;

Recommendation: The word *member* is to be replaced with ***believer***.

So as to read:

The subject of Communion and Feet Washing was considered and the Assembly decided that both are taught in the New Testament and may be engaged in at the same service or at different times at the option of the local churches. In order to preserve the unity of the body, and to obey the sacred Word, it was recommended that every ~~member~~ **believer** engage in these sacred services, which should be observed one or more times each year. (1st A., 1906, Bk.M., p15; DF 12).

Motion to Amend Duties of The World Missions Board

I. RECOMMENDATION

Pages 80-81, S12. MINISTRY OF WORLD MISSIONS, I. World Mission Board, B. Duties and Authorities

We recommend:

That we amend page 81, S12. MINISTRY OF WORLD MISSIONS, I. World Missions Board, B. Duties and Authorities, Paragraph 7 by inserting and with Church of God International administrative structure of the International General Assembly.

So as to read:

7. To allow each country/territory flexibility in matters of polity to reflect cultural differences or government requirements, as long as the changes do not conflict with the doctrinal statements or Practical Commitments and with Church of God International administrative structure of the International General Assembly.

II. RECOMMENDATION:

Pages 80-81, S12. MINISTRY OF WORLD MISSIONS, I. World Mission Board, B. Duties and Authorities

We recommend:

That we amend page 81, S29. S12. MINISTRY OF WORLD MISSIONS, I. World Missions Board, B. Duties and Authorities, by adding to Paragraph 7 the following: "No change shall be implemented by a national assembly or convention, or by administrative decree, until such has been presented to the Area Field Director and Director of World Missions, and then approved by the World Missions Board."

So as to read:

7. To allow each country/territory flexibility in matters of polity to reflect cultural differences or government requirements, as long as the changes do not conflict with the doctrinal statements or Practical Commitments of the International General Assembly. No change shall be implemented by a national assembly or convention, or by administrative decree, until such has been presented to the Area Field Director and Director of World Missions, and then approved by the World Missions Board.

Evangelistic Associations

RECOMMENDATION:

Page 135, S40 EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATIONS

We recommend:

That we strike:

~~**S40 EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATIONS**~~
~~**Evangelistic Associations or other organizations of this type shall not be organized within the Church of God without the express approval of the International Executive Council. All existing organizations shall be either approved by the International Executive Council or be dissolved.**~~

EXPLANATORY NOTES
In affirmation of our greatest resource, our people, the Great Commission, and our desire to see Church of God leaders advance into every corner of the world, we affirm the initiative of and the Gospel work being done by our ministers and laity around the world. We encourage those who would be inclined to start nonprofits, NGOs, businesses and other organizations if it advances the Kingdom.

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP – *Bylaw* Issue

Rationale

During recent years, there have been calls for ordained ministers, especially women, to have membership on the International General Council.

The following recommendation provides modification to a bylaws item and would provide an equitable method for certain ordained ministers to be members of the International General Council with voice and vote authority. Through this measure only those ordained ministers who fulfill the qualifications stated for Ordained Bishops would be eligible for International General Council membership.

RECOMMENDATION:

Page 61, S2. BYLAWS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD, ARTICLE VI, 2. INTERNATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL, *Members*

> The International General Council is composed of all ordained bishops of the Church of God, who shall comprise its voting constituency.

We recommend:

> **That we amend page 61, S2. BYLAWS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD, ARTICLE VI, 2. INTERNATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL, *Members,* by inserting *and ordained Ministers, men and women, who fulfill S22. ORDAINED BISHOP, II., item 2, Qualifications of Ordained Bishops* of the Church of God, who shall comprise its voting constituency.**

So as to read:

> **The International General Council is composed of all ordained bishops and ordained ministers, men and women, who fulfill S22. ORDAINED BISHOP, II., item 2, Qualifications of Ordained Bishops of the Church of God, who shall comprise its voting constituency.**

(revised by Executive Council – January 2020)

INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL EXPANSION – *Bylaw Issue* (Two-thirds Vote Required) (2-14-20)

Rationale

To provide greater representation to all constituencies and areas of the world, the International Executive Council should be reflective of the global reach of the Church of God. Adding six additional members to the International Executive Council opens the opportunity for a greater diversity of membership. Further, if the General Council agrees to change the Bylaws to allow for broader representation, a further motion is available to designate six (6) positions to foreign nationals residing and ministering outside the United States.

Page 63, S2. BYLAWS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD, ARTICLE VI, 3. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, Members

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

RECOMMENDATION:

We recommend:

> **That we amend page 63, S2. BYLAWS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD, ARTICLE VI, 3. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, Members, by deleting** *eighteen councilors [the Council of Eighteen] and replace with— twenty-four councilors [the Council of Twenty-four].*

So as to read:

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

(NOTE: It is understood that if this measure passes, all other references in the Minutes, including references in the Bylaws to the Council of Eighteen, will be editorially changed to conform with this measure.)

Aging of Ministry

Task Force: Aging in Ministry

The 77th General Assembly approved the appointment of a Task Force to study the aging of ministry in the Church of God and ways and means to provide meaningful recognition and affirmation of retired and aging ministers.

According to the Task Force Report, more than half of American pastors are older than fifty-five years of age. However, the Report further asserts the global dimensions of aging ministers and must consider the needs of all aging ministers. In summary, the Task Force recommends the following ways and means to assist retired or aging ministers: retirement financial planning; utilization as mentors; continued integration of retired ministers into ministry opportunities; provide resources and connectivity through SpiritCare; gathering events specifically focuses upon retired ministers; dedicate financial resources for retired and aging ministers where possible; engage in systemic prayer programs; and provide meaningful recognition and affirmation.

We recommend:

> That we encourage the inauguration of the DOUBLE HONOR INITIATIVE to be implemented at various levels of the Church of God predicated upon 1 Timothy 5:17, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor…". That this initiative provide meaningful recognition and affirmation for retired and aging ministers contextualized to the global setting. Further, that the initiative create, cultivate and value our relationships with retired and aging ministers augmenting their sense of purpose and presence they deserve.

Note: According to the Resolution, Generational Assimilation, implementation of ways and means to provide meaningful recognition and affirmation is under the jurisdiction of the Executive Council. However, Item 26 from the 77th Agenda "Aging of Ministry Task Force" calls for Agenda recommendations, as necessary, to the General Council.

INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
I. Selection
(Full Gospel Church of God in South Africa, and Gereja Bethel Indonesia Church of God)

Rationale:

In S5. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, I. SELECTION, Item 3. Page 68, the Minutes alludes to only the "memorandum of agreement" with the Full Gospel Church of God in South Africa. This item does not include the "memorandum of agreement" with the Gereja Bethel Indonesia Church of God. The motion simply corrects an oversight and clearly articulates recognition of the relationship between the Church of God in America and Gereja Bethel Indonesia.

RECOMMENDATION:

That S5. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, I. SELECTION, 3.

In accordance with the memorandum of agreement, the moderator of the Full Gospel Church of God in South Africa shall be a member of the International Executive Council of the Church of God in America, and the general overseer of the Church of God shall be a member of the Executive Council of the Full Gospel Church of God in South Africa.

We recommend:

That we amend pages 68-69, S5. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, I. SELECTION, 3., by inserting the following in red: *and the general overseer of the Geraja Bethel Indonesia Church of God*; further, the general overseer of the Church of God shall be a member of the Executive Council of the Full Gospel Church of God in South Africa *and the Executive Council of the Gereja Bethel Indonesia Church of God*.

So as to read:

3. In accordance with the memorandum of agreement, the moderator of the Full Gospel Church of God in South Africa and the general overseer of the Gereja Bethel Indonesia Church of God shall be a member of the International Executive Council of the Church of God in America, and the general overseer of the Church of God shall be a member of the Executive Council of the Full Gospel Church of God in South Africa and the Executive Council of the Gereja Bethel Indonesia Church of God.

QUALIFICATIONS OF MINISTRY

Rationale:

While the Minutes articulate various ministry ranks and position title, the inclusion of qualifications is limited. In most cases, the primary criteria listed is "Selection," sometimes "Requirements," and generally throughout "Duties and Authorities." In light of this comprehensive review of ministry ranks, the following motion is presented.

RECOMMENDATION:

We Recommend:

That the International Executive Council complete a study and submit to the General Council at the 79th International General Assembly, 2022, recommendations delineating qualifications of ministry congruent with ministry ranks as stated in the Minutes: Book of Discipline, Church Order, and Governance.

RANKS OF MINISTRY

Rationale:

The primary ranks of ministry are addressed in the *Minutes*. Other "highly specialized areas of ministry" include Minister of Music and Minister of Christian Education. Neither of these are eligible for ordination as long as they remain solely in the particular field of ministry. As a result, persons with these gifts and preparation are currently seeking normative ordination. This motion recommends that specialized areas of ministry may fulfill their calling and receive full ordination in accordance to prescribed requirements and be recognized as an Ordained Minister of Music or Ordained Minister of Christian Education.

RECOMMENDATION:

Page 106, S26. MINISTER OF MUSIC AND MINISTER OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

We recommend:

That we amend page 106, S26. MINISTER OF MUSIC AND MINISTER OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, by inserting the word "ORDAINED." Further, that all appropriate references of the change be adapted to comply with this modification throughout the Minutes.

So as to read:

ORDAINED MINISTER OF MUSIC and
ORDAINED MINISTER OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

USA National Assembly

OPTION 1

Task Force: International Executive Council Bylaws Issues (Referred Items)

Referred Item
Review the National Assembly concept and how the Minutes address or mandate such.

This referred motion calls for a review of the National Assembly concept. The Minutes states under Commission on Organization Report, National, "That each country, where practical, conduct a national assembly at which consideration would be given to business pertaining to the ministry of the church in that country. Further, each country determine the frequency, format, and voting constituency of its assembly."

Currently, all countries with Church of God presence convene a national assembly with varied assembly terms. The USA is the only country that does not convene a national assembly. Because of the historical development of the COG in and from the USA, the General Assembly has always convened in the USA.

Before moving to a National Assembly, action should be taken to qualify and identify what is related to USA/National governance/funding, and international governance/funding.

Recommendation Options:

1. Consider convening a quadrennial International General Assembly and quadrennial USA National Assembly alternately every two years. This option would require significant modifications to adapt all electoral positions to correspond to the four-year cycle. Further, the question remains, at which assembly (national or international) would elections be accomplished?
2. According to the Minutes, S5. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, III. Duties and Authorities, 14., Page 71, "The initial structure of a U.S.A. National Council/Assembly shall be the same as the International General Council/Assembly, and that the International Executive Council shall schedule time for business unique to the United States of America to be handled during the week of the International General Assembly." Implement the existing stated paradigm for contextualization of USA General Council/Assembly.
3. Make no modifications and continue in the current General Assembly format.
4. Consider the opportunity for heightened engagement of the General Assembly in the governance process of the COG.

Issues for Motion Consideration

- Currently, the Bylaws ARTICLE VI, 1. International General Assembly, Meeting, states, "The International General Assembly shall meet biennially to consider all

recommendations from the International General Council." Any changes to meeting term of two years would be a bylaws issue.

- In the past, the General Council has considered altering the General Assembly term and determined to remain with the two years term. However, there have been modification of the electoral terms to four years, which is now demonstrating influence of four years versus two years.
- The concept of a USA National Assembly with dedicated sessions was attempted in Indianapolis without much success. It was convened the morning following the General Assembly with only a small constituency attending.
- It should be a priority to qualify and identify what is related to USA/National governance/funding, and international governance/funding before convening a USA National Assembly.

OPTION 2

Resolution for the International General Assembly to Convene Outside of the USA Every Ten Years

"The times require a global emphasis and that we consider the possibility of convening the International General Assembly, at least 10 years, outside the continental United States. It should be noticed the model of the early Church, which having understood that the Church is not a country, but the Kingdom of God, long before the Reformation convened at different places (the Council of Jerusalem, Ephesus, Constantinople, etc.).

WHEREAS, we honor the beginnings and roots of the Church of God in the United States, affirming the achievement of growing from that first group of believers to a movement with presence in over 185 countries.

WHEREAS, the growth and expansion of the Church place on ourselves the responsibility of taking into account all of our members. That to this end it is important to have due representation to the end of enriching the business process.

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED, that we convene the International General Assembly in a country outside of the continental United States, at least every 10 years.

Recommendation:

Minutes, Page 60, Article VI—Governing Bodies

1. INTERNATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
   MEETING

To read: The International General Assembly shall meet biennially to consider all Recommendations from the International General Council. Further, that we convene The International General Assembly in a country outside of the continental United States, at least every 10 years."

Issues for Motion Consideration

- This motion would definitely be a bylaws issue, ARTICLE VI, Governing Bodies, 1. INTERNATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY, Meeting.
- Consideration might be given to make a detailed study regarding the following: potential locations, travel/accommodations, visa/medical requirements, meeting facilities, expected global attendance, budget, length of meeting, sessions dedicated to USA and international issues, support and resources from the host country, congruency with the four years electoral process, harmonization of international flexibility regarding voting constituency and USA governance, needed advance planning and preparations, exhibits, and other variables.

RECOMMENDATION: TASK FORCE ON BYLAWS ISSUE

We recommend:

That the General Assembly implement the existing stated paradigm for contextualization of the USA General Council/Assembly:

S5. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, III. Duties and Authorities, 14., Page 71, "The initial structure of a U.S.A. National Council/Assembly shall be the same as the International General Council/Assembly, and that the International Executive Council shall schedule time for business unique to the United States of America to be handled during the week of the International General Assembly."

Motion Committee Submissions – *Bylaw* Issue (Two-thirds Vote Required)

Rationale

Historically, the International General Council met Monday through Friday with the General Assembly session occurring on Saturday. Under that schedule, new business from the floor had to be submitted to the motions committee by the third day (Wednesday) of the International General Council.

Under the current format, the International General Council meets Tuesday through Friday morning with the General Assembly session being held on Friday afternoon. Since new business can currently be submitted to the motions committee up until 2:00 p.m. on the third day (Thursday) of the International General Council, sufficient time is needed to "receive, classify, clarify, eliminate duplication, and dispatch for placement on the agenda following the completion of the printed agenda" items that may be submitted to the motions committee, and for consideration of those items by the International General Council.

Page 62, **S2. BYLAWS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD, ARTICLE VI, 2. INTERNATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL, *Agenda***

> 4. Any new business shall be presented to the chairman of the motions committee, which committee shall receive, classify, clarify, eliminate duplication, and dispatch for placement on the agenda following the completion of the printed agenda. Any new business presented to the motions committee shall be presented in typewritten form not later than 2 p.m. of the third day of the International General Council.

RECOMMENDATION:

We recommend:

> **That we amend page 62, S2. BYLAWS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD, ARTICLE VI, 2. INTERNATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL, *Agenda, paragraph 4,* by deleting *third*** and replacing with ***second***.

So as to read:

> 4. Any new business shall be presented to the chairman of the motions committee, which committee shall receive, classify, clarify, eliminate duplication, and dispatch for placement on the agenda following the completion of the printed agenda. Any new business presented to the motions committee shall be presented in typewritten form not later than 2 p.m. of the second day of the International General Council.

Lee/PTS Ministerial Scholarship

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

Subject: Ministry offices
Date: Sunday, February 23, 2020 at 2:50:42 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: Wendell C. Smith
To: General Overseer, General Overseer
CC: First Assistant General Overseer, First Assistant General Overseer, Second Assistant General Overseer, Second Assistant General Overseer, Secretary General, Secretary General

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Sirs:

I greet you in the name of Jesus. I want humbly suggest that it is time the credentialed ministry entrance level change. In other words, instead of the

Exhorter title who are called Minister X or Y, or Evangelist X or Y, this level I respectfully suggest be License minister, then the ordained Minister and ordained bishop levels or titles remained.

I suggest at 78 th General Assembly 2020 is the best time to resolve this issue. The Exhorter ministry title or level is not "compatible" with other standard evangelical and Pentecostal denominations/church organisations even though Church of God want to relate well and be understood by them.

God Bless

Wendell C. Smith

GENERATIONAL ASSIMILATION TASK FORCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the greatest challenges for any church/denomination is effective generational assimilation. While core values are never to be compromised, variations in style, mythology, and culture make it difficult to incorporate rising generations into yesterday's culture.

The Church of God is not alone in this challenge. The Church of God has deep roots in a primarily rural culture while current and future generations continue to flood to major cities of the world where diversity is the norm of the day. Recognizing diversity in ministry styles and delivery systems to a multicultural world are paramount to reaching the harvest while maintaining our core values of doctrine and mission. It's not an either/or proposition– it's both/and. There will continue to be a "rural" world and culture and an urban culture that must be effectively reached as the Church of God presses into the future. It is imperative that we be more intentional to maximize our effectiveness and deploy "sons and daughters" to all cultures according to their personal ministry calling and gifts.

While the Church of God has been effective in some aspects of ministerial preparation (i.e., MIP), it has suffered in its placement around the globe. We have also struggled in the identification of ministry gifts in the Jeremiah Generation and incorporating them into our placement process. Each department challenged with training/placement of the Jeremiah generation has operated as its own independent contractor with little or no coordination from other departments and educational agencies/institutions charged with the same mandate. Departmental turf wars coupled with a lack of financial prioritization has frankly left us in a generational ministerial crisis. Many in the Jeremiah generation view the church as outdated and

culturally irrelevant with no strategy to fix it and have found placement in more advanced para-church organizations and ministries that have outpaced our placement process.

The *Generational Assimilation Task Force* was given the assignment of charting a strategic course to begin to correct/facilitate some of the current deficiencies and make specific recommendations to make our process better. Some of our considerations centered around the following:

- What mechanisms can we create in our present structure that makes placement more effective?

- How do we effectively communicate those opportunities?

- What are the current attitudes toward the Church of God and future ministry in our church by the Jeremiah generation?

- How can we begin to build a road map to identify, train, and deploy the Jeremiah generation?

CURRENT ATTITUDES

In the summer of 2019, approximately 700 Church of God students were surveyed in youth camps and International Teen Talent. The goal was to determine some of the attitudes of this generation previously mentioned. This was an excellent sampling reflecting the following information (tab 2):

- 64% Female
- 16% African American
- 70% Caucasian
- 3.3% Hispanic
- 23% Northeast Representation
- 55% Southeast

- 25.8% currently hold credentials

- 66% know how to get involved in their local church

- 26% are familiar with future opportunities in the Church of God and the Church of God makes them known

I feel the Church of God has the best ministerial training for my giftedness/ calling:

- 3.9% strongly disagree
- 3.9% moderately disagree
- 7.5% slightly disagree
- 21.1% neither
- 19.3% slightly agree
- 17.5% moderately agree
- 27% strongly agree

I plan to pursue my education:

- 29.1% online
- 39.0% campus
- 31.9% both

Survey ministry callings:

- 8.3% pastor
- 3.9% media
- 20.6% worship/music
- 8.3% children
- 15% student
- 4.8% administration
- 3.1% evangelist
- 1.1% church planter
- 2.8% missionary/inner city
- 19.3% unsure

Do you plan to pursue ministry credentials?

- 37.3% yes
- 15.5% no
- 47.2% unsure

The survey leaves us with some overall conclusions: (1) There is moderate favorability to the Church of God and its ministries; (2) There is a desire to be involved in ministry in the Church of God; (3) The challenge comes as they grow older and start looking for opportunities beyond their own local context.

RESULTS

From the survey results, as well as the experiences of individual task force members, we have made recommendations to attempt to complement existing training opportunities while creating a new paradigm to meet the changing cultural demographic in our church. The main factors in making our recommendations are as follows:

- The desire of the Jeremiah generation to be involved in ministry
- The lack of communication of ministry opportunities in the Church of God
- The increasing education/ministry opportunities within the local church
- The increase in online education
- The increasing diversity of ministry calling to the Jeremiah generation
- The rise of education/training beyond the traditional college and seminary context

RECOMMENDATIONS

The *Generational Assimilation Task Force* makes the following recommendations to the Executive Council for consideration:

1. The appointment of a *Generational Ministry Task Force* chaired by a member of the Executive Committee to bring together all departments/agencies commissioned with the responsibility of training/placement of the Jeremiah generation. Its purpose is for the development/coordination of the following:

    - Development, coordination, and standardization of Regional ministry/leadership schools (recommendation 2)

- The creation of ministry placement opportunities and their awareness to the Jeremiah generation (i.e., World Missions – How does a student train and deploy to a City of Light?)
- Church planters
- Online ministry placement system

2. The development and implementation of regional ministry/leadership schools based in local churches for the development and deployment of the Jeremiah generation based on their gifts and calling, and the release of those into ministry in the Church of God. These regional schools should reflect the diversity of the Church of God. Regional schools will offer online educational opportunities for students with certificate and four-year degree programs available to those interested.

Practical Application Discussion Points

a. Every department/agency that is commissioned with training of the Jeremiah generation should be represented on the task force:

   - Youth and Discipleship
   - World Missions
   - PTS
   - Ministerial Development

b. Must be chaired by member of the Executive Committee for accountability of each department/agency.

c. Coordinate opportunities/pathways/bridges of ministry through some of the following possibilities:

   - Summer internships
   - Connecting City of Light projects with potential missionaries during Mission's Week at Lee University
   - Job fair - forum for administrative bishops, etc., to interview potential ministry candidates through an organized process (i.e., online, personal, Zoom, etc.)
   - Creation of an online placement process through social media Regional Leadership Schools

d. Regional Leadership Schools

- Develop standardization for leadership
- Develop educational opportunities
- "Brand" the concept
- Work with assimilation task force for placement in ministry
- Establish standardization for local churches for recognition into program

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas A. Madden, Chair
Kevin McGlamery
Marlon Greene
Justin Sharpe
Michelle Davenport
Angel Marcial, Jr.
David Blair
Clayton Watson
Don Bennett
Joe Dobbins
Rob Taylor

Wednesday, October 21, 2020

Motion to Executive Council

Church Membership

Disorderly Conduct of Ministers

Page 112

4. Any minister found guilty of sexual abuse of a child or a second offense involving adultery, fornication or any other sexual misconduct, or any combination of these offenses, shall have his/her credentials revoked. He/she must disfellowshipped from the church. However, the opportunity for reconciliation and restoration to church membership shall be given future consideration in appropriate cases.

Explanation:

I have had a member of our church, arrested for Sexual Exploitation of a Minor, Sexual Exploitation of a Minor - Photographs and 10 other counts... He pleaded guilty to 2 felony counts and the other charges were dropped... he seen 9 months in county jail... even though he is repentant... the consequences of his plea are such that he is a Registered Sex Offender...

He has asked to attend our worship services, we have a policy for his attendance, he is supervised and restricted to certain areas and cannot be around children.

However, he is still a member... I know that we can prefer charges and remove his name...

I see a need to add a section to our minutes that would require churches to disfellowship those '**convicted**' of sexual abuse of a child or sexual exploitation of a minor...

I propose:

Any member found guilty of child sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a minor be disfellowshipped from the Church of God. However, the opportunity for reconciliation and restoration to church membership shall be given future consideration in appropriate cases.

Wednesday, October 21, 2020

I am submitting this for consideration and am open to discuss or to have the Council edit this appropriately…

Humbly Submitted,

Marc Campbell

Ordained Bishop [26533]

New Covenant Church of God [10837]

843.870.3920 [cell]

revmarc@juno.com [email]

NORTH CLEVELAND
CHURCH OF GOD

May 19, 2021

Dr. Timothy M. Hill, General Overseer
Church of God Executive Council
2490 Keith Street
P. O. Box 2430
Cleveland, TN 37320-2430

Dr. Timothy Hill and Executive Council of the Church of God,

Greetings in Christ my fellow ministers and leaders in the Lord!

In as much as more and more women are answering the Call to preach, teach, and pastor within the Church of God, are pursuing seminary education, are applying for ministerial license as is evidenced in the large number of women MAP and MIP candidates and graduates each year, and are seeking support on various social media platforms, the need for female role models and mentors in ministry is at an unprecedented peak within our church and ministerial ranks. For the last day harvest of souls to be reached, a concentrated effort on female ministerial development is warranted.

To that end, I propose for your consideration that each state or region will appoint an experienced female minister as a Credentialed Women's Coordinator (CWC) for that state or region that supports, encourages, and provides unique opportunities for fellowship and training exclusively for credentialed women within that state/region. Because women face challenges in ministry unique to their gender, having female support and understanding are vital to the flourishing and maturity of women in pulpit ministry.

While having credentialed women on MIP boards is essential for initial training at the entry-level of ministry, ongoing support, fellowship, and development is needed for life long learning for Church of God women ministers. The CWC for each state/region should have no less than 10 years of full-time experience and be in good standing with ministerial reporting and working supportively with their state bishop. Each CW Coordinator would maintain a Facebook or social media group exclusively for the licensed women ministers in their state to connect and resource one another with periodic Zoom meetings and fellowship/training gatherings at state camp meetings and prayer conferences.

The Credentialed Women's Coordinator would be appointed and work with the state office like any other appointed leader or board within that region reporting the needs, progress, and testimonies of the CW group to the state bishop. The CW coordinator must have achieved the highest level of licensure available and be an example of one who has pursued higher education for qualification, credibility, and respect in ministerial leadership.

Psalm 68:11, *"The Lord declares the Word, but the women who proclaim it are a mighty throng."* There are individuals who will only be persuaded to accept and believe the gospel through the voice of women. When women in ministry have felt minimized, the growth and witness of the Church has been limited below its potential reach and impact. Where women were released and launched into ministry leadership, where their voice has been heard and heeded, and their contributions affirmed, the Church and its mission have thrived. This is evidenced throughout Christian history and within our own Church of God history as well.

The spiritual, academic, emotional, and physical flourishing of credentialed women will bring about flourishing within our churches and across our movement. Ministry mentors and role models for the girls in our nurseries, children's churches, youth groups, and college ministries will make answering the Call the norm rather than the exception for future ranks of licensed ministers in the Church of God. If we do not provide them, other denominations and para-church groups are and will woo, pursue, and welcome them to their ranks without limits on women.

Now is the time to encourage, support, and resource women ministers in the Church of God with leaders who understand them and can help navigate the choppy waters of ministry so that none are lost to other denominations or worse, lost to their Calling. The appointment of a Credentialed Women's Coordinator in each state/region is one small step in the right direction for the daughters, sisters, mothers, and grandmothers of the Church of God. For credentialed women to see and feel the support of their denominational leaders fosters loyalty and faithfulness rather than discouragement or disillusionment.

Thank you for your serious consideration of this proposal for the future of the Church of God by inclusion on the agenda of the upcoming General Council and General Assembly.

Respectfully,

Sandra Kay Williams

PASTOR SANDRA KAY WILLIAMS
Ordained License # 74350
North Cleveland Prayer
North Cleveland Women

North Cleveland Church of God & International Prayer Center
335 11th Street NE Cleveland, TN 37311
skwilliams@nccog.com * 423-584-3385

Preamble

The resolutions that follow address the term/tenure issues of the International Executive Committee and the International Executive Council, caused by our inability to convene the 2020 General Assembly, as well as the term/tenure issue of the International Director and Assistant Director of Youth and Discipleship brought about by the death of the International Director.

Three resolutions are presented, addressing the International Executive Committee, the International Executive Council, and the Youth and Discipleship leadership, with rationale and a resolution for separate consideration of each.

Since the Director and Assistant Director of Church of God World Missions' tenure would have been up in their respective positions had the 2020 General Assembly been held, their tenure is now complete after the "extended term," and neither is eligible to succeed themselves in the position to which they were elected in 2016.

The resolutions that follow concerning the International Executive Committee and International Executive Council only address individuals who would have had tenure remaining had the 2020 General Assembly been held.

It should be noted these resolutions affect only the elections at the 2022 General Assembly.

International Executive Committee Tenure Resolution

Rationale

Due to the inability to conduct the 2020 General Assembly because of the international COVID-19 pandemic, leaders holding appointed and elected positions were left in a state of flux since the General Assembly ***Minutes*** provide no guidance for what to do under those circumstances.

After much discussion and prayer, the International Executive Committee, with consent and approval from the International Executive Council, made the decision to "hold in place" all appointed and elected leaders at both the state and international levels, passing a "continuance of governance" resolution to memorialize such. For state/regional Administrative Bishops and Youth and Discipleship directors, it was determined that not only would those leaders hold in place, but that the two years (2020-2022) until the next General Assembly would not count against their tenure in one state nor against Administrative Bishops' overall tenure of 12 years.

While all elected international leaders were held in place, the resolution that follows addresses the status of four members of the International Executive Committee who still had tenure remaining as of the postponed 2020 General Assembly.

Considerations

The Church of God "Bylaws" provide guidance concerning the selection and tenure of members of the International Executive Committee (S2., page 63 of 2018 General Assembly ***Minutes***):

> **ARTICLE VII**
> **Executive Board**
> **International Executive Committee**—The executive officers of the Church of God shall be the general overseer, three assistant general overseers, and the secretary general. These shall constitute the International Executive Committee. Their tenure in office, manner of selection, duties and authorities, and procedure for filling vacancies **shall be decided by the International General Assembly upon recommendation from the International General Council.** (emphasis added)

The Bylaws take precedence over any other provisions in the *Minutes*. The above cited language allows the International General Council to only make a recommendation regarding the tenure of the members of the International Executive Committee, with the final decision to be made by the International General Assembly. The International General Assembly has the sole authority to determine term/tenure issues of the International Executive Committee. No person or no body of authority has the right to set terms of the Executive Committee, except the International General Assembly upon recommendation from the International General Council.

Effect of Resolution

At the 2016 General Assembly, one member was re-elected and four members were newly elected to the International Executive Committee. As of the planned 2020 General Assembly, the member re-elected in 2016 would have had no tenure left, while the four members newly elected in 2016 would have had four years of tenure remaining (see *Minutes* S7., S8., and S9., pages 75-77). Since the 2020 General Assembly could not be held due to the pandemic, the International Executive Committee, acting as an emergency board (see *Minutes*, S.17., III, page 89), in consultation and with approval of the International Executive Council, exercising its authority to set the time and place for the General Assembly (see *Minutes*, S.3., II. 2, page 65) and acting in the general interest and welfare of the church as the highest governing body of the church between Assemblies (see *Minutes*, S.2, Article VI, 3, page 63), passed a "continuance of governance" resolution that gave legal and ecclesiastical authority for all five Executive Committee members to remain in their elected offices until such time as a General Assembly could be held.

By the passage of the "continuance of governance" resolution, resulting in holding the members of the International Executive Committee in place until the 2022 General Assembly, the member re-elected in 2016 has served a total of ten (10) years on the Executive Committee, thus fulfilling his term and tenure. The four members of the International Executive Committee, newly elected in 2016, were elected to a four-year term, but due to the continuance of governance resolution have served six years as of the 2022 General Assembly.

The resolution that follows allows the International General Council and the International General Assembly the opportunity to address the term/tenure issue of the four International Executive Committee members that were newly elected at the 2016 General Assembly.

- ***Pass***: If passed as presented, the four International Executive Committee members newly elected at the 2016 General Assembly would be eligible to serve for four more years if nominated by the International General Council and elected by the General Assembly.
- ***Fail***: If the resolution fails as presented, the four International Executive Committee members newly elected at the 2016 General Assembly would be eligible to serve for only two more years if nominated and elected.

Resolution

Whereas *the 2020 International General Assembly was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic because of safety concerns for our constituency and international travel bans; and,*

Whereas *our church polity does not specifically address the issue of how to postpone an Assembly nor does it give guidance regarding the effect of a postponement on tenure, elections, or the continuity of governance; and, the highest governing body of the church between Assemblies "*in the general interest and welfare of the church;*" and,*

individual would have completed the maximum 8-year tenure in office at the 2020 International General Assembly; and,

Whereas *the International Executive Council exercised the above-noted authority granted it by the International General Assembly and declared that "*all persons currently holding general elected positions continue in their positions with full legal and ecclesiastical authority until such time as nominations or elections by the International General Council and elections by the International General Assembly can be properly conducted and successors chosen;" and,

Whereas *the tenure of State/Regional Administrative Bishops and State Youth and Discipleship Directors was declared "frozen" at 2020 status and that the period 2020-2022 would not be counted against these individuals' accumulative tenure status.*

Be It Therefore Resolved *that the Assembly period of 2020-2022 shall* ***not*** *be counted toward the 8-year tenure of the four members of the Executive Committee who were newly elected in 2016, should they be reelected.*

(**Note:** If adopted as is, this would mean that if the four men newly elected in 2016 were reelected, they could serve for **four** more years. If the motion fails, if reelected, the moderator would announce that these four could only serve for **two** years. This action is for the 2022 General Assembly only and is not a permanent change.)

International Executive Council Tenure Resolution

Rationale

Due to the inability to conduct the 2020 General Assembly because of the international COVID-19 pandemic, members elected to the International Executive Council in 2018 were held in their respective positions under a "continuance of governance" resolution.

While all elected international leaders were held in place, the resolution that follows addresses the status of the members of the International Executive Council who still had tenure remaining as of the postponed 2020 General Assembly.

Considerations

The Church of God "Bylaws" do not provide specific direction concerning the selection and tenure of members of the International Executive Council, other than to note that the International General Council shall elect the Council of Eighteen. (see *Minutes*, S2., Article VI, page 62).

However, the *Minutes* at **S.5., International Executive Council, I. Selection** (pages 68-69) do provide guidance on the election, term, and tenure of said Council members:

> **S.5. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**
>
> **I. Selection**
>
> **4.** The eighteen (18) members shall be elected by the International General Council biennially, with a member being eligible to succeed himself for one term.

Effect of Resolution

At the 2018 General Assembly, all eighteen (18) members of the Executive Council were elected. Of the eighteen, eleven (11) members were re-elected, having initially begun their tenure in 2016. Because of such, those eleven members would have been ineligible for re-election had the 2020 International General Council been conducted, and therefore are ineligible for re-election now.

In addition, seven (7) International Executive Council members were newly elected at the 2018 International General Assembly, and based upon the *Minutes* provision cited above, all seven would have been eligible to be re-elected by the 2020 International General Council.

The resolution that follows allows the International General Council and the International General Assembly the opportunity to address the term/tenure issue of the seven International Executive Council members that were newly elected by the 2018 International General Council.

- ***Pass***: If passed as presented, the seven International Executive Council members newly elected by the 2018 General Council would be eligible to serve for two more years if nominated and elected by the International General Council.

- ***Fail***: If the resolution fails, the seven International Executive Council members newly elected by the 2018 International General Council would be ineligible for nomination and election to the International Executive Council.

Resolution

Whereas *the 2020 International General Assembly was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic because of safety concerns for our constituency and international travel bans; and,*

Whereas *our polity does not specifically address the issue of how to postpone an Assembly nor does it give guidance regarding the effect of a postponement on tenure, elections, or the continuity of governance; and,*

Whereas *the* Minutes *do clearly state the general authority of the International Executive Council to act as the highest governing body of the church between Assemblies "*in the general interest and welfare of the church*;" and,*

Whereas *seven (7) individuals newly elected to the International Executive Council in 2018 would have had eligibility to serve an additional term if elected at the 2020 International General Assembly, and eleven individuals would have completed the maximum two terms in office at the same General Assembly; and,*

Whereas *the International Executive Council exercised the above-noted authority granted it by the International General Assembly and declared that "*all persons currently holding general elected positions continue in their positions with full legal and ecclesiastical authority until such time as nominations or elections by the International General Council and elections by the International General Assembly can be properly conducted and successors chosen;" and,

Whereas *the tenure of State/Regional Administrative Bishops and State Youth and Discipleship Directors was declared "frozen" at 2020 status and that the period 2020-2022 would* ***not*** *be counted against these individuals' accumulative tenure status.*

Be It Therefore Resolved *that the Assembly period of 2020-2022 shall* ***not*** *be counted as the second two-year term of the members of the International Executive Council newly elected in 2018.*

(**Note:** If adopted as is this would mean that the individuals newly elected in 2018 would be eligible for reelection for another two-year term. If the motion fails, these individuals would be ineligible for reelection in 2022. This action is for the 2022 General Assembly only and is not a permanent change.)

Youth and Discipleship Tenure Resolution

Rationale

Due to the inability to conduct the 2020 General Assembly because of the international COVID-19 pandemic, the International Director and Assistant Director of Youth and Discipleship were held in their respective positions under a "continuance of governance" resolution passed by the International Executive Council.

During the "continuance" term, the International Director of Youth and Discipleship passed away. Following the procedure set out in the *Minutes* at **S.13. PROCEDURE FOR FILLING VACANCY OF AN ELECTED MINISTRY LEADER** (page 85), the Assistant Director of Youth and Discipleship was elevated to the directorship and the "mail in" voting process, provided for in that same section of the *Minutes,* was used to fill the vacant assistant director position. Both positions were filled prior to the half-way point of the "extended" two-year term.

Considerations

The Church of God "*Bylaws*" do not provide specific direction concerning the selection and tenure of the International Director and Assistant Director of Youth and Discipleship, other than to note that the International General Council shall nominate candidates for such positions to the International General Assembly (see *Minutes*, S.2, page 62). However, the *Minutes* at **S.10. MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND DISCIPLESHIP** (page 78) do provide guidance on the nomination and election of both positions, stating that each position is for a four-year term and that the candidate cannot succeed himself beyond one four-year term.

No guidance is provided in the *Minutes* concerning term or tenure when succession by the International Director or the Assistant Director of Youth and Discipleship occurs during the midst of a term. Historical practice within the Church has been that if a person succeeded another in a position, and more than half the term is left, the time in the position is counted against the successor. However, if less than half the term remains upon the successor assuming the position, the time in the position does not count against the successor. *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (12th Edition, paragraph 56:31) provides for the same procedure.

No provision in the *Minutes* states this historical practice other than a notation in **S.5. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL** (see page 69), regarding filling position on the International Executive Council: "*If more than one half of the vacated term remains, the member elected to fill that term will be eligible to succeed himself for only one additional term.*" While this provision is not directly pertinent to the International Director and Assistant Director of Youth and Discipleship, it does provide evidence of the historical practice used by the denomination.

Effect of Resolution

The terms for the International Director and Assistant Director of Youth and Discipleship are four years and a person elected to such positions cannot succeed himself (see *Minutes*, S.10., page 78). However, the current holders of both offices took their positions, not in the midst of a regular four-year term but prior to one-half of the two-year extended term being fulfilled under the "continuance of governance" provision.

The resolution that follows allows the International General Council and International General Assembly the opportunity to address the term/tenure issue of the International Director and Assistant Director of Youth and Discipleship who assumed their positions during the extended term caused by the pandemic.

- ***Pass***: If passed as presented, the International Director and Assistant Director of Youth and Discipleship would be eligible to serve four-year terms if nominated by the International General Council and elected by the International General Assembly.
- ***Fail***: If the resolution fails, the International Director and Assistant Director of Youth and Discipleship would be eligible to serve for only two years if nominated and elected.

Resolution

Whereas *the office of Director of Youth and Discipleship was vacated due to the untimely passing of the elected individual; and,*

Whereas *in accordance with the International General Assembly Minutes, the assistant Director of Youth and Discipleship was advanced to the position of director; and,*

Whereas *the Assistant Director's vacancy was filled in accordance with the* International General Assembly Minutes *by mail ballot; and,*

Whereas *these two individuals are fulfilling the two-year term extension granted by the International Executive Council to their predecessors; and,*

Whereas *both positions were filled prior to one-half of the two-year extended term being fulfilled by their predecessors; and,*

Whereas *an individual who has served more than half a term in a particular office is considered to have served a full term in that office.*

Be It Therefore Resolved *that the period of time since their advancement to the offices of International Director and Assistant Director of Youth and Discipleship shall* ***not*** *be counted toward their tenure in office if elected to their respective positions.*

(NOTE: If adopted this would mean that the International Director and Assistant Director of Youth and Discipleship would be eligible for election to a four-year term. If the motion fails, if elected to this position, it would be announced that the individual(s) would only be eligible to serve for two years. This action is for the 2022 General Assembly only and is not a permanent change.)

CHURCH OF GOD

MINUTES: *Church of God Book of Discipline, Church Order, and Governance*

REVIEW OF *MINUTES*

Items to Consider Related to the Following:

- ***Items Related to Pandemic***
- ***Items Related to Procedure for Filling Vacancies***
- ***Other Issues***

Following the impact of COVID-19 upon the polity of the Church of God and justification for decisions made, the following review identifies specific items that should/could be addressed, considered for modifications, and prepared as General Assembly Agenda Items. Second, items are identified that impact the process related to "Procedure for Filling Vacancies" that may need amplification for greater clarity and prepared as potential General Assembly Items as well. The third listing identifies other issues that the General Assembly may consider.

The "Review" only identifies the various related items, locations throughout the *Minutes*, and possible considerations for the Agenda. (The key defining terms are provided in red.)The "Review" does not provide the copy solutions for each item at this point of the process. This "Review" highlights the potential items for presentation to the appointed committee, discussion, and preparation of final copy solutions for the Agenda. While these items are included in the "Review", it does not mean they will need amplification or be placed on the Agenda. They are included for discussion and clarify the connection of items for any polity changes.

ITEMS RELATED TO PANDEMIC

S2. BYLAWS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD

- **Article VI. Governing Bodies, 1. INTERNATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY, *Meeting* (p.60)**

Current:

"The International General Assembly shall meet biennially to consider all recommendations from the International General Council."

Consider:

The article could be amplified to address unusual circumstances (global pandemic, war, disaster, etc.) providing authority and process for any modifications to a biennial meeting.

- **Article VI. Governing Bodies, 2. INTERNATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL, *Agenda* (p.61)**

Current:

"1. The International General Council shall meet biennially to consider all recommendations from the International Executive Council."

Consider:

This article could be amplified to address unusual circumstances (global pandemic, war, disaster, etc.) providing process for any alternate meeting possibilities (in-person or virtual) and process for agenda preparation, and method of presentation.

- **Article VI. Governing Bodies, 2. INTERNATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL, *Agenda, 4.* (p.62)**

Current:

"4. Any new business shall be presented to the chairman of the motions committee, which committee shall receive, classify, clarify, eliminate duplication, and dispatch for placement on the agenda following the completion of the printed agenda. Any new business presented to the motions committee shall be presented in typewritten form not later than 2 p.m. of the third day of the International General Council."

Consider:

Should there be any modification of the process because of unusual circumstances, could motions be presented only in "typewritten" form, or hand-written, online, etc. In addition, if the General Council had an alternate meeting schedule, there may not be enough length of the meeting to satisfy the "third day" submission rule.

➢ **Article VI. Governing Bodies, 2. INTERNATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL, *Parliamentary Procedure and Authority, 1.* (p.62)**

Current:

"1. The names of all persons on the nomination ballots receiving twenty-five (25) or less votes for an elected office shall be posted in an appropriate designated place in lieu of reading those names to the International General Council."

Consider:

If there is any modification of the convening of the General Council, the posting of votes "in an appropriate designated place" needs clarity. Would this be on a wall or bulletin board or online?

➢ **Article VI. Governing Bodies, 3. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, *Authority, 1.* (p.63)**

Current:

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

Consider:

This item was utilized in the justification of the postponement of the General Assembly as a result of the pandemic. While the item articulates, "act upon any and all matters pertaining to the general interest and welfare", it may be beneficial to expand the narrative to provide clarity and demonstrate authority under what conditions and circumstances.

While this is a BYLAWS, it is duplicated under S5. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, III. Duties and Authorities, as item number 1. However, there is no specific delineation in any of the fifteen Duties and Authorities defining the scope of authority under unusual circumstances such as a pandemic.

(THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE NOT BYLAWS)

➢ **S3. INTERNATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY, II. Procedures, 2., 3., (p. 65)**

Current:

"2. Arrangements for the time and place of the International General Assembly shall be left to the International Executive Council.

3. The general overseer is authorized to call an International General Assembly of ministers provided that travel and other conditions are such that the International Executive Committee and the Council of Eighteen deem it wise to do so."

Consider:

Possibly expand the item to clarify items 2. and 3. to include circumstances ("travel"), "conditions" or variables that would dictate an alteration in the convening of the General Assembly.

➢ **S5. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, I. Selection, 4. (p. 69)**

Current:

"4. The eighteen (18) members shall be elected by the International General Council biennially, with a member being eligible to succeed himself for one term."

Consider:

Possibly delineate under certain circumstances (e.g., pandemic) a member's tenure could be extended.

➢ **S5. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, III. Duties and Authorities, 1. (p. 69)**

Current:

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

Consider:

This item duplicates verbatim Bylaws, Article VI. 3. International Executive Council, Authority. Further, this item was utilized in the justification of the postponement of the General Assembly as a result of the pandemic. While the item articulates, "act upon any and all matters pertaining to the general interest and welfare", it may be beneficial to expand the narrative to provide clarity and demonstrate authority under what conditions and circumstances. The clarity narrative could be listed in both or under S5.

➢ **S6. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, II. Filling Vacated Offices (p. 72)**

Current:

"Should the offices of any two or more members of the International Executive Committee be vacated simultaneously through death, accident, national disaster, war, national epidemic, or otherwise, a call shall be issued within thirty (30) days by the remaining members of the International Executive Committee for an emergency meeting of the ministers of the Church of God…"

Consider:

This is an unusual item in that it provides the only mention of "pandemic" in the *Minutes* along with other conditions, allows the calling of an emergency meeting of ministers of the COG, and upon nomination for the ordained bishops, elects in a special session two or more IEC members to fill unexpired terms of office. A close review generates a number of questions related to superseding the Bylaws and General Assembly authority, "ministers" does not qualify as credentialed, and allows at least three members of the Executive Council to petition for an emergency meeting. There is no definition of eligibility beyond unexpired terms of office. Nor does it articulate the kind of meeting (in-person or virtual), process of nomination or methodology of voting. Trust we never have to deal with this item!

Since "pandemic" is listed, this item could be perceived as related to "all things pandemic" with governance questions under specific circumstances.

- **S6. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, III. Duties and Authorities, 6., (p. 73)**

Current:
"6. Act as an emergency board."

Consider:
A close review seems to show number 6. could be related to the next item, number 7., authority to transfer money from one ministry to another. This authority was also utilized in the justification of the IEC duties related to the postponement of the General Assembly. Further, it seems related to another item, S17. Emergency Board, page 89. Neither of these locations provide any clarity as to what comprises an emergency. It seems important to provide more detailed circumstances that qualify as "emergency."

- **S17. BOARDS AND COMMITTEES, GENERAL, III. Emergency Board, (p. 89)**

Current:
"The International Executive Committee is empowered to act as an emergency board."

Consider:
As mentioned in the previous item, this was utilized in the justification of the IEC duties related to the postponement of the General Assembly. This statement indicates, "empowered to act". Again, clarity could provide greater definition of circumstances strengthening the item.

- **S7. GENERAL OVERSEER, II. Duties and Authorities, 4. (p. 75)**

Current:
"4. Look after the general interest of the churches."

Consider:
This item was also utilized in the justification of the postponement of the General Assembly. The brevity calls for clarity and process of authority. The implication is "churches" including all churches around the world. Possibly provide circumstances that would be applicable to authoritative action of the General Overseer.

- **S7. GENERAL OVERSEER, II. Duties and Authorities, 9. (p. 76)**

Current:
"In the event of any emergency which warrants doing so, call the Council of Eighteen and associate councilors into session for counsel."

Consider:
Possibly clarify "any emergency which warrants doing so" and who are associate councilors. It appears in practice, this is already operational and if that is the case, this item could stand.

(THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE RELATED TO "TENURE" FOR ELECTED EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP UNDER UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES)

The tenure of executive level leadership under the circumstances of the global pandemic has generated the need to amplify the *Minutes* to accommodate unusual situations. All of the following items are congruently related to the following issues:

- Impact of Unusual Circumstances for Possible Extended Tenure Elected or Appointed)
- Clarification of an Unexpired Term and Impact on Declared Tenure Polity
- Upon Completion of Unexpired Term or Altered Terms Because of Unusual Circumstances—Identify Eligibility for Reelection

The following locations in the *Minutes* deal with this issue. The "Review" will list the locations without differential considerations for each.

ELECTED POSITIONS

- **S7. GENERAL OVERSEER, III. Procedure for Filling Vacancy, (p. 76)**
- **S8. ASSISTANT GENERAL OVERSEER, III. Procedure for Filling Vacancy, (p. 76)**
- **S9. SECRTARY GENERAL, III. Procedure for Filling Vacancy, (p. 77)**
- **S10. MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND DISCIPLESHIP, I. Director of Youth and Discipleship, A. Selection, Tenure, and Salary 1., (p. 78)**
- **S10. MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND DISCIPLESHIP, II. Assistant Director of Youth and Discipleship, A. Selection, Tenure, and Salary 1., (p. 78)**
- **S12. MINISTRY OF WORLD MISSIONS, I. World Missions Board, B. Duties and Authorities, 5., (p. 80)**
- **S12. MINISTRY OF WORLD MISSIONS, III. Director of World Missions, A. Selection, Tenure, and Salary, (p. 82)**
- **S12. MINISTRY OF WORLD MISSIONS, IV. Assistant Director of World Missions, A. Selection, Tenure, and Salary, (p. 83)**

CHURCH GOVERNMENT—STATE: TENURE RELATED ITEMS

- **S32. STATE OVERSEER, V. Term of Office, (p. 127)**

- **S33. STATE COUNCIL, (p. 131)**
  NOTE: There is no statement regarding tenure or extended term circumstances for any state council positions nationally or internationally.

- **S36. STATE YOUTH AND DISCIPLESHIP BOARD, (p. 134)**
  NOTE: There is no statement regarding tenure or extended term circumstances for any state youth and discipleship board positions nationally or internationally.

- **S37. STATE YOUTH AND DISCIPLESHIP DIRECTOR, I. Selection, 2. (p. 135)**

- **S38. STATE EVANGELISM AND MISSONS DIRECTOR (USA MISSIONS, (p. 135)**
  NOTE: There is no statement regarding tenure or extended term circumstances.

ITEMS RELATED TO PROCEDURE FOR FILLING VACANCIES

- **S9. SECRETARY GENERAL, III. Procedure for Filling Vacancy, (p. 77)**

Current:

"In the event the office of the secretary general be vacated because of death, disability, advancement, or the incumbent in any wise being disqualified, the general overseer will submit by mail the names of the next two men receiving the highest vote, who were not elected to any general office, to the ordained bishops. The ordained bishops shall select the one who will fill the vacancy in the secretary general's office. Ballots must be returned to the general overseer within twenty (20) days to be valid votes. The one receiving the majority vote shall be declared elected to fill the unexpired term of the secretary general."

- **S13. PROCEDURE FOR FILLING VACANCY OF AN ELECTED MINISTRY LEADER, B. Filling Vacancy of Assistant Ministry Leader, (p. 85)**

Current:

"In the event the office of an elected assistant ministry head be vacated because of death, disability, advancement, or the incumbent in any wise being disqualified, the general overseer will submit by mail the names of the next two persons receiving the highest vote for that position, who were not elected to any general office, to the ordained bishops, to select the one who shall fill the vacancy in the ministry.

Ballots must be returned to the general overseer within 45 days to be valid votes. The one receiving the majority vote shall be declared to fill the unexpired term of the assistant to the ministry in question."

Consider:
With the expanded online resources, submitting names to the ordained bishops "by mail" only minimizes the effectiveness of the process. This issue has already been modified in other locations of the *Minutes*. However, with the loss of David Blair, the elevation of the assistant, and the process of election, this method of communications needs updated. Further, the item needs the same modification S9. related to the position of Secretary General. In addition, the number of days to return ballots is different ranging from 20-35 days.

OTHER ITEMS

Following a comprehensive review of the *Minutes*, there were several items for possible consideration that are not related to pandemic, tenure or filling a vacancy. These are only for thought.

- **S1. GENERAL CHURCH, III. Form of Government, B. Church and State, 3., (p. 57)**

Current:
"We, the Church of God resolve that, it is not the right of governments to compel churches or church related institutions to participate in or fund activities that are morally reprehensible."

Consider:
In light of the dramatically changing cultural polarity and erosion of core values, a resolution of affirmation of the statement, and Doctrine and Polity Committee commentary could be relevant for Church of God constituents.

- **Article VI. Governing Bodies, 1. INTERNATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY, *Members* (p.60)**

Current:
"The International General Assembly is composed of all members and ministers of the Church of God 16 years of age an above. Members and ministers of the Church of God present and registered at the International General Assembly shall comprise its voting constituency."

Consider:
This is a significant item for possible discussion involving an in-person vs virtual General Assembly.

- **S2. BYLAWS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD, Article VI., Parliamentary Procedure, (p.61)**

NOTE:

This item is included in the Bylaws and provides only direction for a member speaking. However, in ARTICLE VI. 1. INTERNATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY, Parliamentary Authority, indicates, "*Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall serve as the official guide for the business of the International General Assembly in all matters to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the bylaws of the International General Assembly." Further, it is repeated under the same Article VI., 2. INTERNATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL.

It would appear the aforementioned Parliamentary Procedure is redundant since the declaration is *Robert's Rules* as official guide in all matters.

- **S4. INTERNATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL, III. International General Council Agenda, (p. 67)**

Current:

The item currently indicates in paragraph one…"all recommendations must be received by the International Executive Council in time for consideration at its April session…"

Consider:

With the alteration of earlier convening of General Assemblies, it may be beneficial to modify the statement for "at its April session" to "at its Spring session".

- **S29. INSTRUCTIONS FOR MINISTERS, I. General Instructions for Ministers, 10. Responsible Use of Social Media, (p. 110)**

Current:

The current narrative provides only a scriptural foundation.

Consider:

Expanding directions and inclusion under PRACTICAL COMMITMENTS, II. Moral Purity, B. Reading, Watching, and Listening. However, it could open up broad levels of engagement and governance.

MEANING AND USAGE OF THE TITLE BISHOP *(03-11-20)*

Rationale

Following extensive discussion, reports, referrals for further study and review, and completion of 23 Global Open Forums and subsequent Survey, there seems to be a desire to have a straight-forward, up or down vote on whether we should retain "Ordained Bishop" as a rank of ministry. Further, it is understood that should there be a desire to maintain Ordained Bishop as a rank of ministry, no additional action is needed, but should there be a desire to change the rank of Ordained Bishop to some other name, a change to the Bylaws will be needed and will require a two-thirds vote.

RECOMMENDATION:

Therefore, we recommend the following resolution:

RESOLUTION REGARDING THE MEANING AND USAGE OF THE TITLE BISHOP

WHEREAS, there has been extensive discussion since 2000 concerning the meaning and the usage of the title of Ordained Bishop; and

WHEREAS, there have been many reports, global open forums, and multiple measures brought before this body concerning the meaning and the usage of the title of Ordained Bishop; and

WHEREAS, the Church of God International General Assembly *Minutes* in section I of S22. ORDAINED BISHOP provides extensive background on the biblical understanding of ordination, the New Testament designation of church ministries and offices, and the cultural appropriateness of using the title Bishop;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that we continue use of the title Ordained Bishop to denote the third and highest rank of ministry in the Church of God; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that all references in the Church of God International General Assembly *Minutes* shall heretofore continue to denote the third and highest rank of ministry within the Church of God as Ordained Bishop.

(NOTE: Should this measure pass by a majority vote, no additional action is needed. However, should this measure not receive a majority vote, the matter regarding the "Meaning and Usage of the Title Bishop" will be referred to the International Executive Council to bring back an appropriate motion(s) and/or Bylaw changes to the 2022 International General Council.)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Prepared for the Church of God Executive Committee and Executive Council
Jayson VanHook, PhD
January 3, 2020

The Global Ministry Forums Survey yielded a total of 6,323 responses among Church of God ministers and laypersons across the world. Means (statistical averages), standard deviations (statistical variability), and frequency distributions were calculated for all responses and were presented in a comprehensive analysis of the Global Ministry Forums survey. For each question, the responses agree/strongly agree were combined into an agreement percentage, and the responses disagree/strongly disagree were combined into a disagreement percentage for presentation purposes. This executive summary highlights the general findings, with select highlights to responses of Ordained Bishops on certain topics thought to be of interest to the Church of God Executive Committee and Executive Council.

GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

In total, 77% of the respondents were male, with 74% being between the ages of 36-65 and 90% of respondents indicating a marital status of married. In terms of ethnicity, 57% reported being white non-Hispanic, while another 26% reported as Hispanic/Latino and 9% as African-American. The educational level of respondents was distributed as follows: 46% of respondents had less than a four-year degree, 30% indicated the highest degree earned as a four-year degree, while 24% of respondents had completed a graduate degree. Among respondents, 76% were from the United States, with 44% reporting their current place of residence as the USA-South. Respondents from Central and South America each represented 7% of the population, while respondents from Mexico represented 5% of the population. The vast majority (90%) of respondents have been members of the Church of God for more than 10 years. In terms of rank/role, 44% were Ordained Bishops, 27% were Ordained Ministers, while 24% indicated their current role as some other form of ministry and 6% as laypersons. 60% of respondents were currently engaged in full-time ministry, while 21% were engaged in part-time ministry with another 13% reporting as ministers not currently in vocational ministry.

IMPORTANCE AND UNDERSTANDING OF RANKS

- 70% of all respondents agree there is a lack of understanding regarding the three current ranks of ministry: Exhorters, Ordained Ministers, and Ordained Bishops.
- It appears as if the vast majority of respondents did not feel they had adequate understanding of why the ranks were created.
- 66% of respondents agreed the ranks do assure local church congregations that the Church of God is properly evaluating ministerial qualifications.
- 65% of respondents either agreed or disagreed that maintaining the three ranks is important. This agreement percentage increased to 70% among Ordained Bishops.
- 40% of respondents indicated disagreement that the distinct ranks have no validity outside of determining whether a person can participate in certain meetings and serve on certain boards; 50% of Ordained Bishops indicated some form of disagreement with this statement.
- 47% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with reducing the ranks of ministry to Licensed Minister and Ordained Minister. That number was 56% among Ordained Bishops.

QUALIFICATIONS

- 92% of all respondents agreed background checks should be required for all potential ministers prior to engaging in any ministerial training activity, while 75% agreed background checks should be conducted at least every 5 years for credentialed ministers.
- 77% of respondents indicated ministers should be required to engage in "continuing education" programs, while 48% disagreed that ministers should be required to renew their ministerial credentials periodically by filing an application; 54% of Ordained Bishops disagreed with that latter statement.
- 69% of respondents agreed the Church of God must require at least a minimum level of educational training for its ministers in order to advance, while 57% agreed that MIP provides sufficient training for those preparing to serve as pastors.
- Laypersons were generally more favorable for items related to enhanced qualifications, education and periodic checks for credentialed ministers than respondents from the three ministerial groups.
- 72% of all respondents agree the qualifications for the three ranks of ministry are sufficient; this agreement level increased to 76% among Ordained Bishops.
- 59% of respondents indicated agreement that Ordained Ministers should be allowed to participate in the International General Council, while only 26% of all respondents disagreed. Among Ordained Bishops, agreement was just 40% with 44% of Ordained Bishops indicating some form of disagreement to this statement.

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

- 73% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that it is un-biblical for women to participate in any denominational leadership role. Among Ordained Bishops, the level of disagreement on this item was 70%.
- On every other item of this sub-scale, the percentage of Ordained Bishops indicating agreement was approximately 17% less than non-Ordained Bishops.
- 62% of all respondents agreed that women would bring a healthy perspective to the direction of the Church of God if allowed to serve in all denominational roles. This agreement percentage was 52% among Ordained Bishops.
- 67% of respondents agreed that women should be allowed to serve on State/Regional Councils and participate in the International General Council; this compares to approximately 57% of Ordained Bishops for these two items.
- 59% of respondents agreed that women should be allowed to participate in all levels of ministry in the Church of God, with 48% agreeing women should be allowed to obtain the rank of Ordained Bishop and 42% agreeing women should be allowed to serve as Administrative Bishops. Among Ordained Bishops, 49% indicated women should be allowed to participate in all levels of ministry, with 39% agreeing women should be allowed the rank Ordained Bishop and 31% as Administrative Bishops.
- Female respondent agreement percentages were approximately 25% greater than male respondents on each item in this sub-scale. In addition, younger respondents, those with higher levels of educational achievement, and those from outside of the United States were more likely to indicate agreement on virtually each item of this sub-scale.

ATTENTION UPON THE MEANING AND USAGE OF THE TERM BISHOP

- 81% of respondents indicated agreement that the debate over the title *Bishop* needs to be resolved so that the Church of God can move on from the issue.

- 74% of all respondents disagreed that the title *Bishop* is offensive; that disagreement percentage was 80% among Ordained Bishops.
- Among Ordained Bishops, 69% agreed they do not use the title *Bishop* in their everyday role as pastor, and 44% do not use the title when referring to the highest rank of ministry in the Church of God to friends from other denominations.
- 49% of all respondents agreed the title *Bishop* should be reserved only for those in a leadership role over other pastors, such as Administrative Bishop or Presiding Bishop; this agreement percentage was 46% among Ordained Bishops.
- 34% of Ordained Bishops prefer the title Ordained Minister to Ordained Bishop, while 38% of Ordained Bishops indicated some form of disagreement with this statement.
- 45% of respondents disagreed that women should be excluded from obtaining the title of *Bishop* due to the biblical definition of this position. That number was 37% among Ordained Bishops, while 46% of Ordained Bishops agreed with that statement.

Analysis of the Global Ministry Forums Survey

JAYSON VANHOOK, PHD

January 3, 2020

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2 INTRODUCTION

For the last two decades, the Church of God has been engaged in continued discussion related to the "Meaning and Usage of the Title *Bishop.*" A study was called for in 2004, a narrative was approved in 2006, and continued calls for additional study were heard over the next decade. In 2016, the International General Assembly of the Church of God called again for "Further Study" to address whether it is necessary to change current nomenclature in order to clarify and fulfill the intent of the International General Council. Following the presentation of an in depth "Further Study" presented to the 77th International General Council, the General Assembly approved the following motion:

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

As a result of the 77th International General Assembly action, the implementation of Global Ministry Forums was mandated. In 2018, the Church of God Executive Committee developed a plan to hold forums in 25 locations around the world. A committee was established to plan and execute these forums according to the mandate, and these forums were held during the 2019 calendar year.

2.1 VARIABLES

The variables, as mandated by the International General Assembly action, called for discussion and dialogue regarding four variables:

- Importance and Understanding of Ministry Ranks
- Qualifications
- Women in Leadership Positions
- Attention Upon the Meaning and Usage of the Term *Bishop*

2.2 INSTRUMENT

In order to better understand the perspective of the Church through the Global Forums, the Church of God Executive Committee determined it would be helpful to design and administer a survey to gather feedback regarding the four variables mandated by the International General Assembly. To maintain the integrity of the assessment and analysis process, a third-party independent research entity was contracted to assist in survey development, collection and analysis. This research entity, led by Dr. Jayson VanHook, worked closely with a team appointed by the Executive Committee to develop the instrument and manage the collection of data during the year.

A 42-question instrument was developed for this purpose, including 9 demographic items, 9 items related to Importance and Understanding of Ministry Ranks, 9 items related to Qualifications, 7 items related to Women in Leadership Positions, and 8 items related to Attention upon the Meaning and Usage of the Term *Bishop*. English and Spanish versions of the instrument were made available in both digital and paper forms. Both versions of the instrument are provided in Appendix I.

2.3 Survey Process

During the 2019 calendar year, the Global Ministry Forums survey was made available to forum attendees through both digital and paper formats. In addition, the survey was made available through a link on the Global Ministry Forums website, via the Minister's Reporting Portal, as well as through press releases and other electronic communication methods. Due to the broad distribution of this instrument, respondents were asked to provide an email address to limit responses to one per person. To maintain the anonymity of respondents, all individual survey responses were collected and maintained by the third-party research entity, and results were only made available in aggregate form. During the administration window, a total of 6,323 unique responses were received, including:

- 4,645 digital survey submissions – English version
- 338 paper survey submissions – English version
- 1,224 digital survey submissions – Spanish version
- 116 paper survey submissions – Spanish version.

2.4 Analysis

Following the final Global Ministry Forum in November 2019, the survey administration period closed. During November and December 2019, the data was analyzed by the third-party research entity. This report documents the results of that analysis.

2.5 Use of Results

The results of the analysis will be used by the Church of God Executive Committee and Church of God Executive Council to fulfill the mandate of the 77th International General Assembly that appropriate motion(s) be formulated specifically addressing the stated issues and brought to the 2020 International General Council.

3 RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

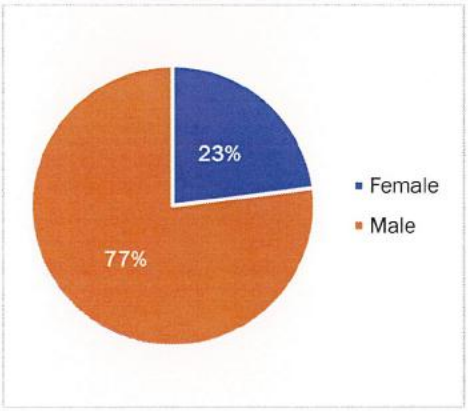
The Global Ministry Forums survey included nine items to aid in better understanding certain demographic characteristics of respondents and to enable categorical analyses of survey items in the four sub-scale areas. These items were as follows:

- What is your gender?
  (Female or Male)
- Which category below includes your age?
  (Less than 25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65, 66 years or greater)
- What is your marital status?
  (Single, Married, Separated or Divorced, Widowed)
- What is your ethnicity?
  (African-American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, White-Non Hispanic, Other)
- What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?
  (High school or less, Some college, Completed a bachelor's degree, Some master's level study, Completed a master's degree, Some doctoral level study, Completed a doctoral degree)
- Which global region below includes your current place of residence?
  (Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Central America, Europe, Middle East, Canada, Mexico, USA-Northeast, USA-Midwest, USA-South, USA-West, Oceania, South America)
- Which category below best reflects how long you have been a member of the Church of God?
  (Less than 10 years, 10-20 years, 21-40 years, More than 40 years, I am not a member of the Church of God)
- What is your current role/rank in ministry?
  (Ordained Bishop, Ordained Minister, Exhorter, Minister of CE, Minister of Music, Layperson, Non-member)
- Which statement below best describes your current role in the church?
  (I am in a full-time ministry position; I am in a part-time ministry position; I am a minister but not currently involved in vocational ministry; I am a layperson involved in my local church; I am a layperson but not currently involved in a local church; I am not involved in a local church.)

For each of the nine demographic items, frequencies are provided below in graphical representation along with a short narrative description of the results. *For a more detailed breakdown of responses, see Appendix II (Frequency Distributions of Demographic Items).*

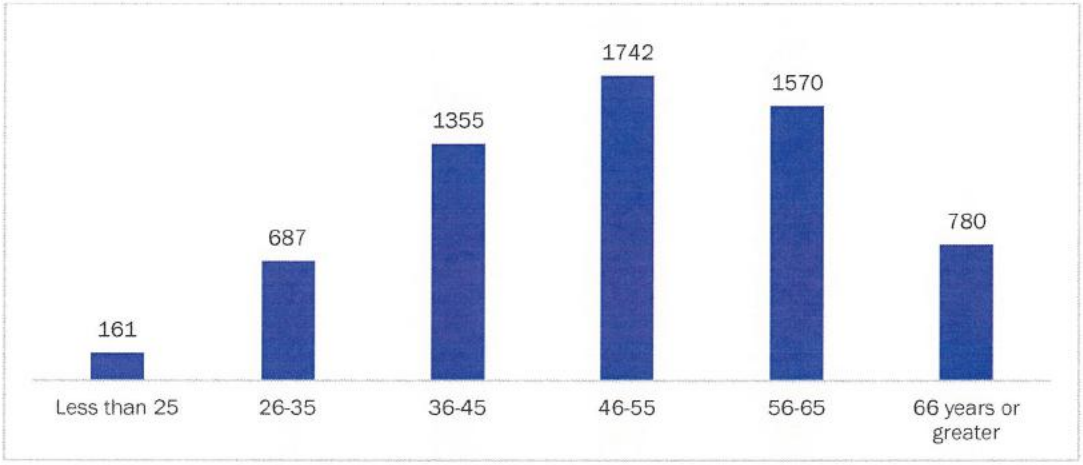
3.1 GENDER

Among all respondents, 4810 (77%) were male and 1448 (23%) were female. This demographic variable was used for categorical analyses of items for each of the four sub-scales.



3.2 Age

Respondents were asked to select their age according to one of six age bands. 74% of all respondents were between the ages 36-65, with the largest age band among respondents 46-55 years of age. The breakdown of responses is provided in the chart below. For the categorical analyses of items throughout the four sub-scales, age bands were collapsed into two groups: 45 years of age and younger (35% of all respondents) and Greater than 45 years of age (65% of respondents).



3.3 Marital Status

Respondents were asked to select their marital status using one of four response options. Among all respondents, nearly 90% indicated a marital status of Married. The remaining respondent population identified in the following way: Single – 6%, Separated/Divorced – 2% or Widowed – 2%.

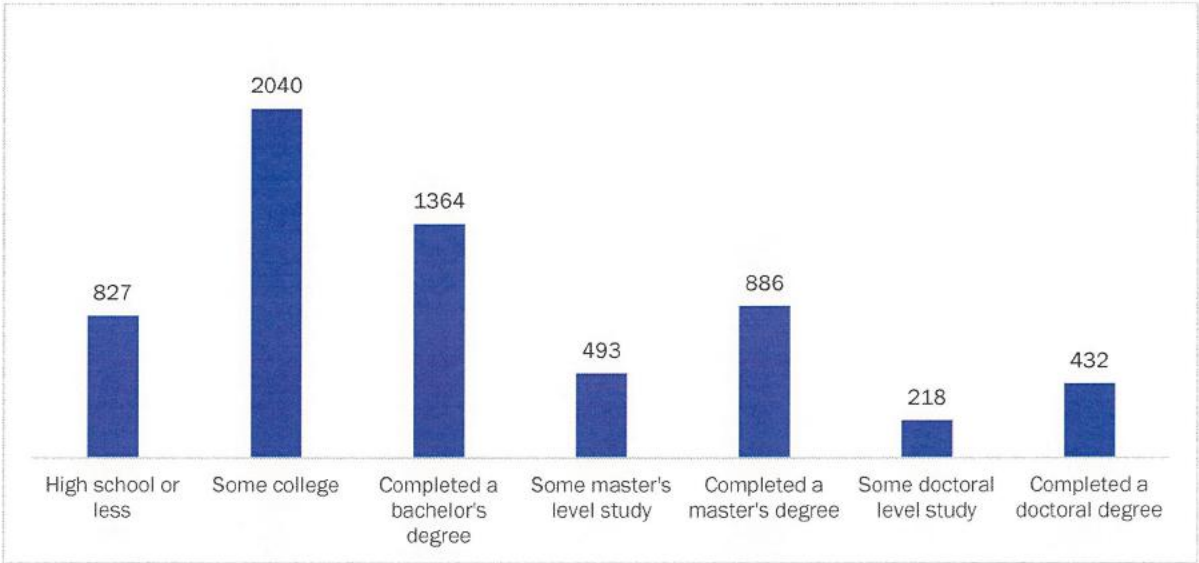
3.4 Ethnicity

Respondents were asked to identify their Ethnicity according to seven response options. Among respondents, 57% identified as White-Non Hispanic, while 26% identified as Hispanic/Latino and 9% as African-American. The breakdown of responses is provided in the chart below.

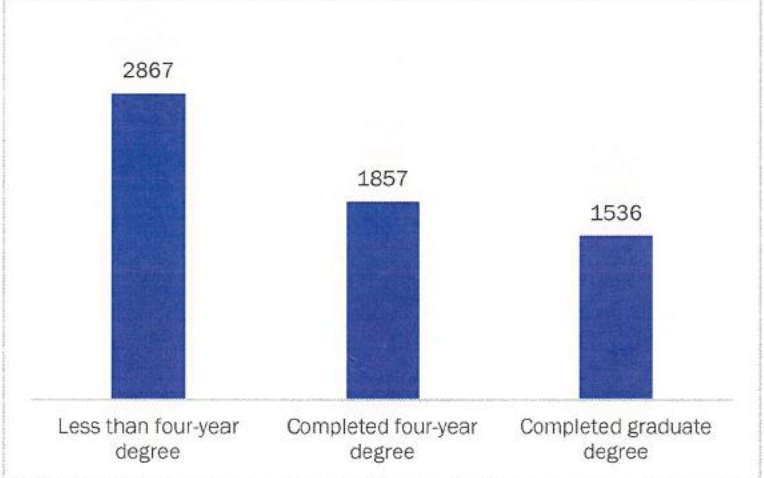
3.5 EDUCATION

What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?

Respondents were asked to select their highest level of formal education according to one of seven response options. A majority of respondents indicated having achieved at least a four-year degree (54%), with another 33% indicating having completed some college-level work. The breakdown of responses is provided in the chart below.



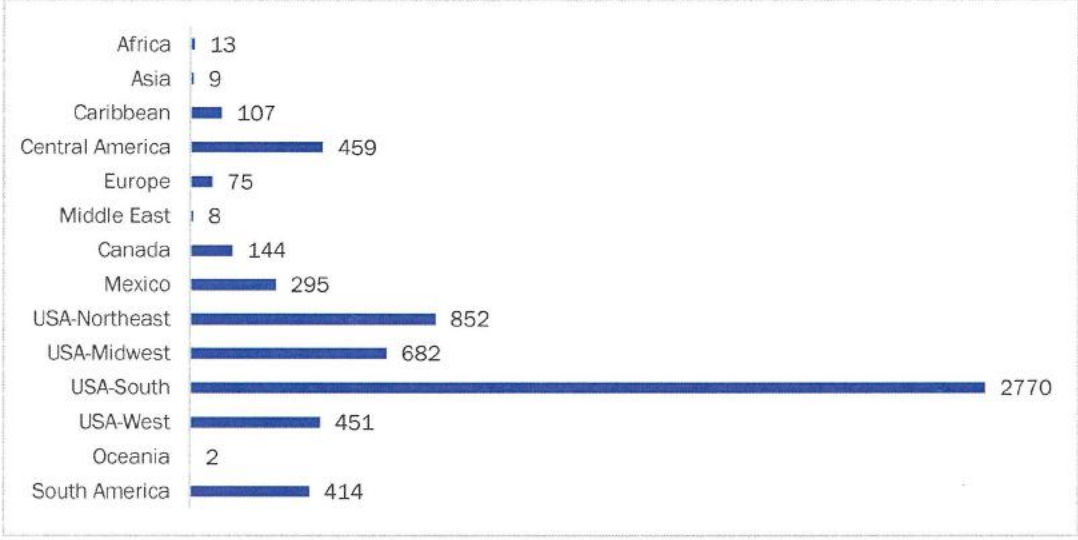
For the categorical analyses of items throughout the four sub-scales, responses were collapsed into one of three groups according to highest completed education. Respondents completing less than a four-year degree represented 46% of the population, while 24% reported having completed a graduate degree and the remaining 30% having completed a four-year degree. The breakdown according to the collapsed Education variable is provided in the chart below.



3.6 Global Region

Which global region below includes your current place of residence?

Respondents were asked to select the global region that includes their current place of residence. Among all respondents, 76% indicated a current residence within one of the four regions of the United States, with 44% of respondents indicating a current residence of USA-South. Other regions with significant representation among respondents included: Central America – 7%, South America – 7% and Mexico – 5%. The breakdown of responses is provided in the chart below.

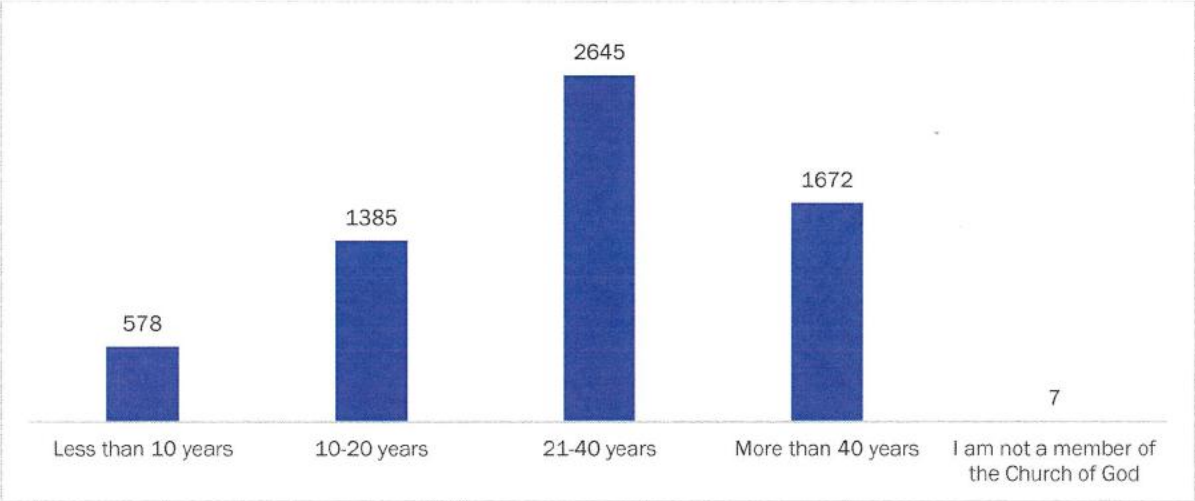


For the categorical analyses of items throughout the four sub-scales, the following global regions were excluded due to low response sizes: Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Oceania.

3.7 COG Membership

Which category below best reflects how long you have been a member of the Church of God?

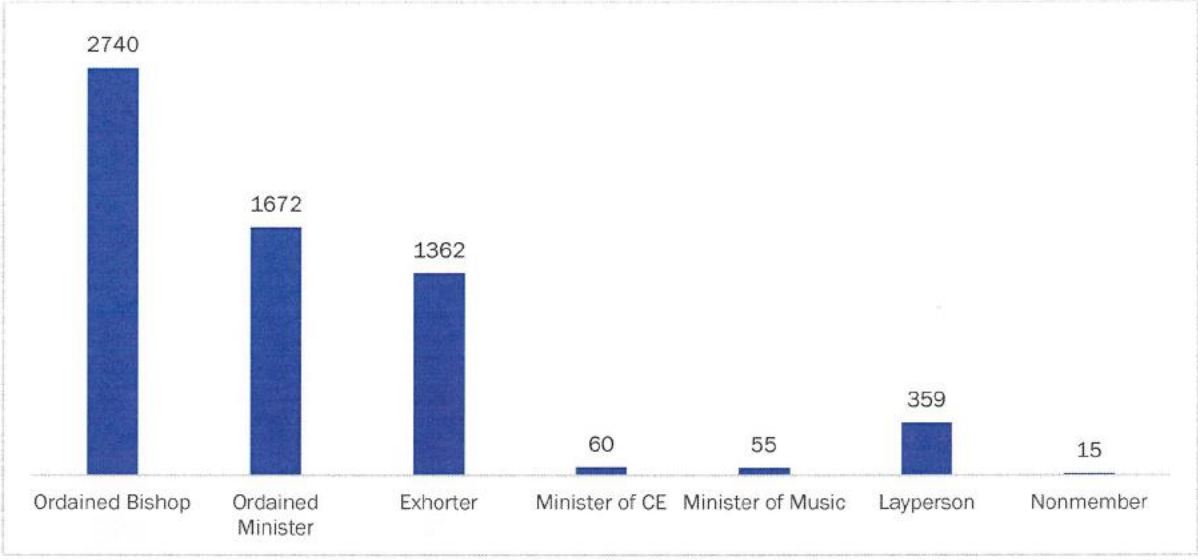
Respondents were asked to identify how long they have been a member of the Church of God according to one of five options. Among all respondents, 90% indicated they have been members of the Church of God for 10 years or greater. The breakdown of responses is provided in the chart below.



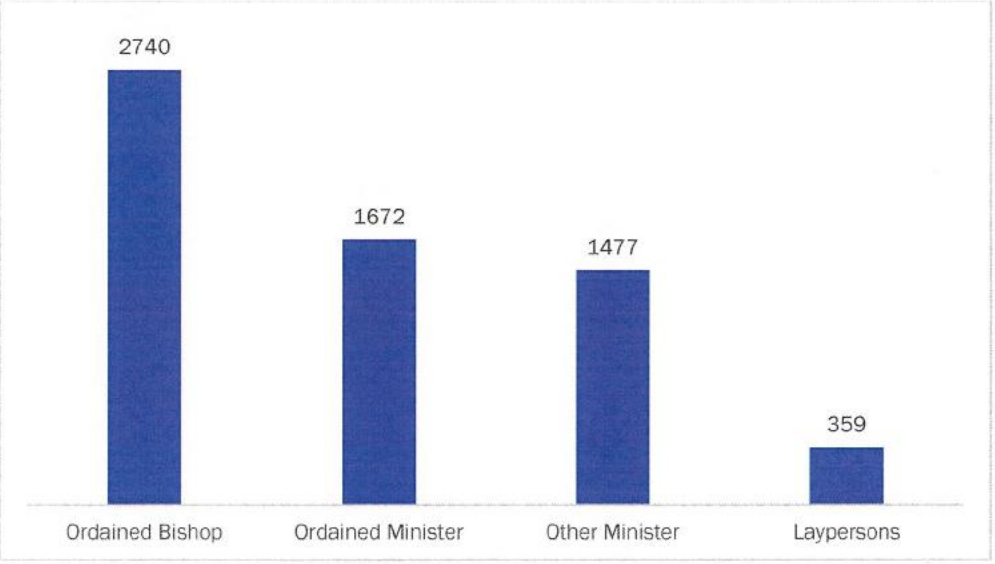
3.8 Role/Rank

What is your current role/rank in ministry?

Respondents were asked to select their current role/rank in ministry according to one of seven response options. Among all respondents, 44% identified as Ordained Bishops, with another 27% identifying as Ordained Ministers, and 22% as Exhorters. The breakdown of responses is provided in the chart below.



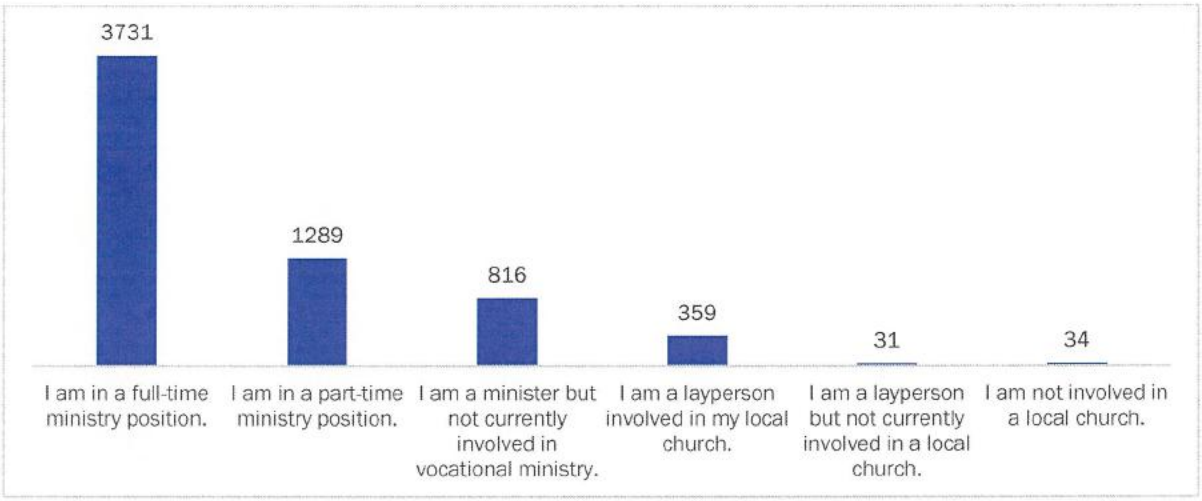
For the categorical analyses of items throughout the four sub-scales, responses were collapsed into one of four groups: Ordained Bishop, Ordained Minister, Other Minister and Laypersons. In addition to the percentages described above, Other Ministers represented 24% of the total respondent population, and laypersons represented another 6%. Nonmembers were excluded from sub-scale analyses. The breakdown according to the collapsed Role/Rank variable is provided in the chart below.



3.9 CHURCH ROLE

Which statement below best describes your current role in the church?

Respondents were asked to identify the statement that best describes their current role in the church according to one of six response options. Among all respondents, 60% indicated they are currently engaged in a full-time ministry position, while another 21% indicated they are currently serving in a part-time ministry position, and 13% identified as a minister not currently involved in vocational ministry. The breakdown of responses is provided in the chart below.



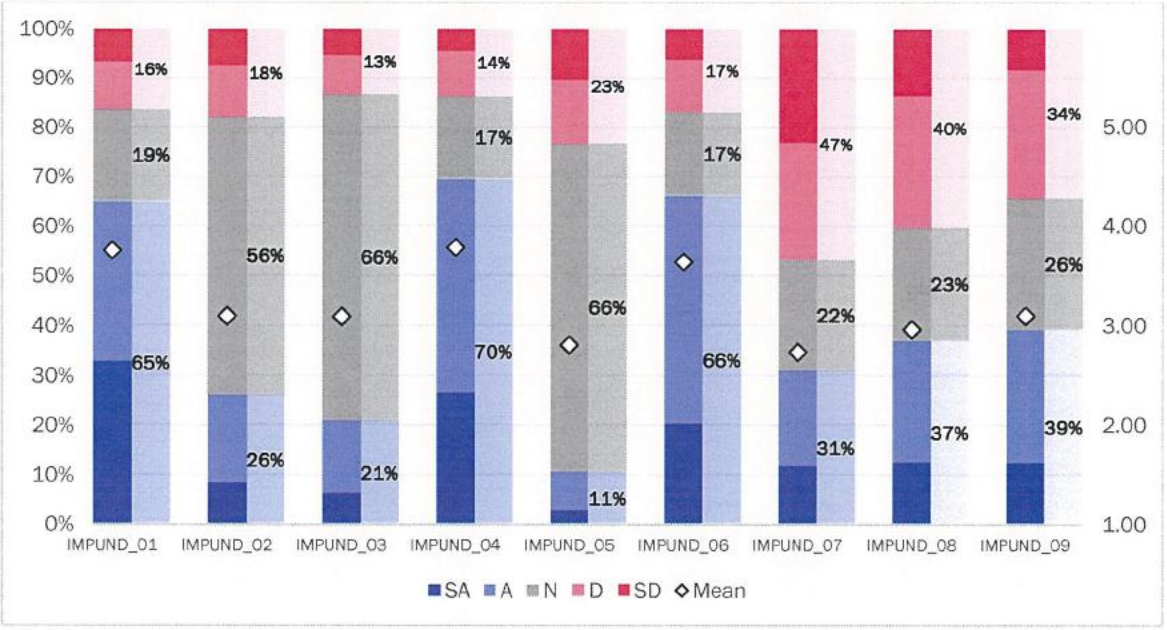
4 IMPORTANCE AND UNDERSTANDING OF RANKS

The Global Ministry Forums survey included nine questions that specifically addressed perceptions on the importance and understanding of ministry ranks in the Church of God. These questions were:

- It is important for the Church of God to maintain three distinct ranks of ministry: Exhorter, Ordained Minister, and Ordained Bishop. *(IMPUND_01)*
- The rank of Ordained Bishop was primarily created to satisfy the desire of ministers outside of the USA to have a recognizable hierarchy of ranks in ministry. *(IMPUND_02)*
- The rank of Ordained Minister was primarily created to satisfy requirements of the military related to the role of Chaplain. *(IMPUND_03)*
- Most laity in the Church of God do not understand the three different ranks of ministry. *(IMPUND_04)*
- The distinct ranks of ministry primarily came about to satisfy requirements of the United States Internal Revenue Service. *(IMPUND_05)*
- The distinct ranks of ministry assure local church congregations that the Church of God is properly evaluating ministerial qualifications for its pastors. *(IMPUND_06)*
- I would support reducing the distinct ranks of ministry to the following two levels: Licensed Minister and Ordained Minister. *(IMPUND_07)*
- The distinct ranks of ministry have no validity outside of determining whether a person can participate in certain meetings (e.g., General Council) and serve on certain boards (e.g., State/Regional Council). *(IMPUND_08)*
- The standards for obtaining each rank of ministry should be more rigorous. *(IMPUND_09)*

4.1 FREQUENCIES AND MEANS FOR ALL RESPONDENTS

Graphical representation of frequencies and mean scores for all respondents are provided below. For each question, frequencies of Likert-scaled responses are presented, with blue indicating various levels of agreement and red indicating various levels disagreement. Means are represented by a diamond-shape. In addition to the full Likert-scale response set, SA and A are combined to identify an agreement band, as well as SD and D to indicate a disagreement band. Narrative descriptions follow.



Respondents were asked to evaluate the importance for the Church of God in maintaining the current distinct ranks of ministry: Exhorter, Ordained Minister, and Ordained Bishop *(IMPUND_01)*. Among respondents, 65% either agreed or strongly agreed that maintaining the three ranks is important, while 16% disagreed or strongly disagreed (mean: 3.75, sd: 1.20). When asked if the distinct ranks of ministry assure local congregations that the Church of God is properly evaluating ministerial qualifications for its pastors *(ImpUnd_06)*, 66% agreed the ranks do provide assurance, while 17% disagreed (mean: 3.64, sd: 1.10). At the same time, nearly 70% of all respondents agreed there is a lack of understanding among most laity in the Church of God regarding the three different ranks of ministry *(ImpUnd_04)*; just 14% of respondents indicated disagreement. Responses to this statement yielded the highest consensus among all items in this sub-scale (mean: 3.78, sd: 1.07).

A number of items in this sub-scale addressed perceptions and understanding regarding *why* the ranks of ministry were created. Three items in particular identified specific reasons for the creation of one or more ranks. These three items, in general, yielded approximately 350 fewer responses than all other items in this sub-scale, indicating respondents might not have felt they had enough knowledge to answer appropriately. These non-responses are important to consider in evaluating the results. When asked if the rank Ordained Bishop was primarily created to satisfy the desire of ministers outside the USA to have a recognizable hierarchy of ranks *(ImpUnd_02)*, 56% of all respondents indicated a neutral response (neither agree nor disagree). This, in addition to the large number of non-respondents, further signals respondents might not have felt they had enough knowledge to provide a judgement. Only 26% of respondents indicated some form of agreement, while 18% indicated disagreement (mean: 3.09, sd: 0.95). Similar results were seen when asked if the rank Ordained Minister was primarily created to satisfy requirements of the military related to the role of Chaplain *(ImpUnd_03)*. In addition to a large number of non-responders, 66% of all respondents indicated a neutral response, while 21% indicated some form of agreement and 13% disagreement (mean: 3.09, sd: 0.83). The lowest levels of agreement on any item in this sub-scale were observed when respondents evaluated whether the distinct ranks primarily came about to satisfy requirements of the United States Internal Revenue Service *(ImpUnd_05)*. Once again, the large number of neutral responses (66%), in addition to the large number of non-respondents, indicates many felt they did not have the appropriate knowledge to make a judgement. Among those who did select a level of agreement, 11% agreed or strongly agreed, while 23% disagreed or strongly disagreed (mean: 2.80, sd: 0.83). In sum, it appears as if the vast majority of respondents did not feel they had adequate knowledge to make a judgment on these three items.

A couple of items on this sub-scale yielded a more centrally-clustered set of responses. The first was in response to the statement: The distinct ranks of ministry have no validity outside of determining whether a person can participate in certain meetings (e.g., General Council) and serve on certain boards (e.g., State/Regional Council) *(ImpUnd_08)*. Among respondents, 13% of respondents each indicated strongly disagree or strongly agree; the remaining responses were flatly distributed among the middle response options: disagree (27%), neutral (23%) and agree (25%) (mean: 2.96, sd: 1.25). Similarly, when asked if the standards for obtaining each rank of ministry should be more rigorous *(ImpUnd_09)*, responses were flatly distributed across the three middle response options: disagree (26%), neutral (26%) and agree (27%), while just 8% of respondents strongly disagreed and 13% strongly agreed (mean: 3.09, sd: 1.16).

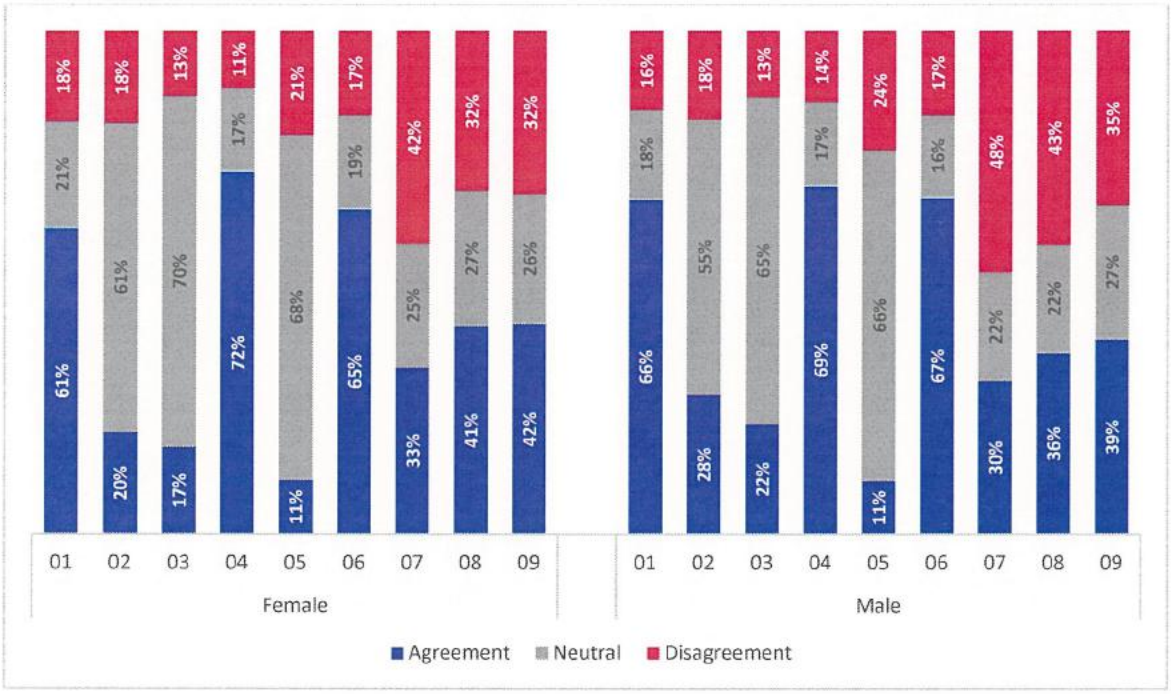
The item yielding the strongest disagreement from respondents was stated: I would support reducing the distinct ranks of ministry to the following two levels: Licensed Minister and Ordained Minister *(IMPUND_07)*. Among all respondents, 47% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this strategy, while 31% of respondents indicated some form of agreement (mean: 2.73, sd: 1.32).

For a more detailed breakdown of item responses, see Appendix III (Means and Standard Deviations – All Respondents) and Appendix IV (Frequency Distributions – All Respondents).

4.2 Frequencies by Respondent Demographics

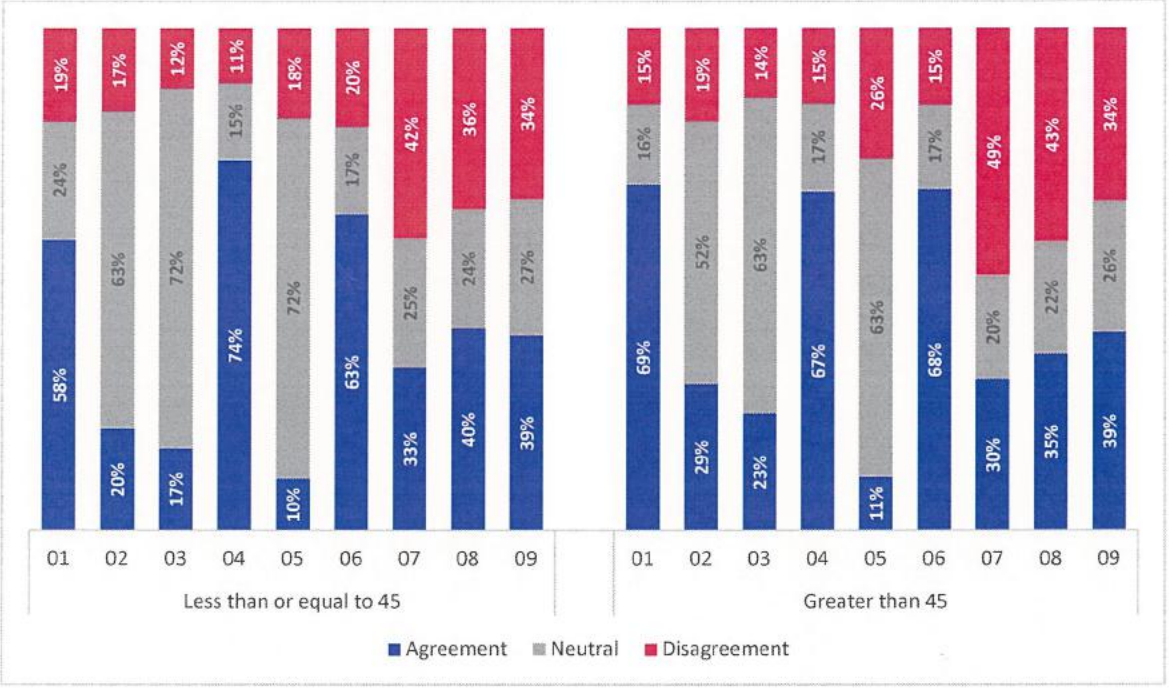
To better understand these data, a categorical analysis was conducted based on 5 demographic characteristics of respondents: gender, age, education, global region, and role/rank. For this analysis, SA and A were combined as agreement and SD and D were combined as disagreement. Frequencies are provided below in graphical representation with a narrative description following. *See Appendix V for item-level means and standard deviations by sub-group.*

4.2.1 Gender



The distribution of responses among the two poles of agreement on the Importance and Understanding of Ranks sub-scale was fairly similar between female and male respondents. In only three instances did a percentage difference exceed 5 points between females and males. Males were more likely to agree (28% vs 20% females) that the rank of Ordained Bishop was primarily created to satisfy the desire of ministers outside of the USA to have a recognizable hierarchy of ranks, while females had higher levels of neutral responses (61% vs 55% males) on that question *(ImpUnd_02)*. Males were more likely to disagree (48% vs 42% females) that they would support reducing the ranks to two levels *(ImpUnd_07)*, and they were more likely to disagree (43% vs 32% females) that the ranks have no validity outside of determining whether a person can participate in certain meetings and serve on certain boards *(ImpUnd_08)*.

4.2.2 Age

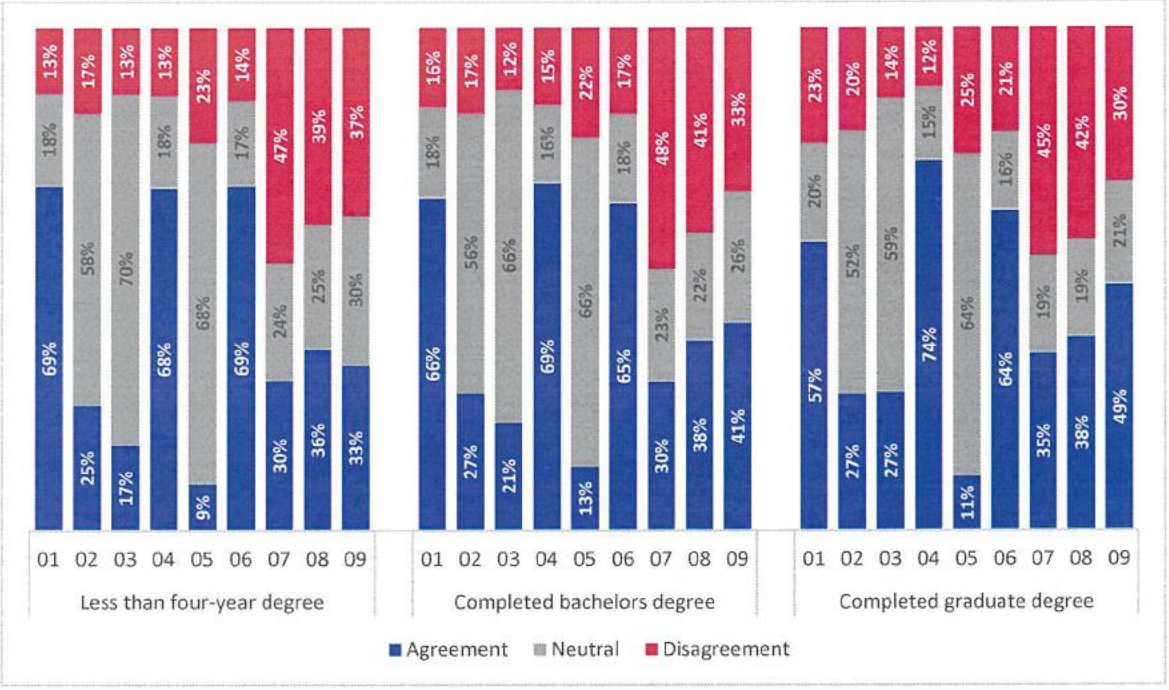


A number of differences were observed when comparing responses based on age bands. Older respondents were more likely to agree (69% vs 58% younger) that the Church should maintain the current three ranks *(ImpUnd_01)*, while younger respondents had higher rates of neutral and disagreement on that item. Older respondents were more likely to agree that the rank of Ordained Bishop was primarily created to satisfy the desire of ministers outside the USA to have a recognizable hierarchy of ranks (29% vs 20% younger) *(ImpUnd_02)* and that the rank of Ordained Minister was primarily created to satisfy requirements of the military related to Chaplaincy (23% vs 17% younger) *(ImpUnd_03)*. Younger respondents were more likely to indicate a neutral response on both of these questions. Older respondents were also more likely to agree (68% vs 63% younger) that the distinct ranks assure local church congregations that the Church of God is properly evaluating ministerial qualifications *(ImpUnd_06)*.

On the other end of the agreement scale, older respondents were more likely to disagree (26% vs 18% younger) that the ranks primarily came about to satisfy requirements of the IRS *(ImpUnd_05)*. Older respondents were also more likely to disagree that they would support reducing the ranks to two levels (49% vs 42% younger) *(ImpUnd_07)* and that the ranks have no validity outside of determining whether a person can participate in certain meetings and serve on boards (43% vs 36% younger) *(ImpUnd_08)*.

Younger respondents were more likely to agree (75% vs 67% older) that most laity in the Church of God do not understand the three different ranks *(ImpUnd_04)*. No difference in agreement existed when asked if standards for obtaining each rank should be more rigorous *(ImpUnd_09)*.

4.2.3 Education



Respondents with completed graduate degrees (57%) were less likely to agree that it is important to maintain the three distinct ranks of ministry *(ImpUnd_01)* and were slightly more likely to agree they would support reducing the distinct ranks to two levels *(ImpUnd_07)* when compared to the other two groups (approximately 67%). Respondents with completed graduate degrees were also more likely to agree that the rank of Ordained Minister was primarily created to satisfy requirements of the military *(ImpUnd_03)* and that laity in the Church of God do not understand the different ranks *(ImpUnd_04)*.

Respondents with less than a four-year degree (69%) were more likely to agree the ranks assure local church congregations that the Church of God is properly evaluating ministerial qualifications, while completers of graduate degrees were slightly more likely to disagree with that statement (21%) compared to the other groups *(ImpUnd_06)*.

Education appears to be most observable as a factor when asked if standards for obtaining each rank should be more rigorous *(ImpUnd_09)*. Respondents with less than a four-year degree (33%) were the least likely to agree with this statement, while agreement incrementally increased for four-year degree completers (41%) and graduate degree completers (49%).

4.2.4 Global Region

Graphically representing responses according to global region is difficult due to the number of regions and number of questions. In order to visualize the data, color scales are provided for each question according to global region, where darker blue indicates more *agreement* and darker red less. Responses from Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Oceania were removed due to small response sizes.

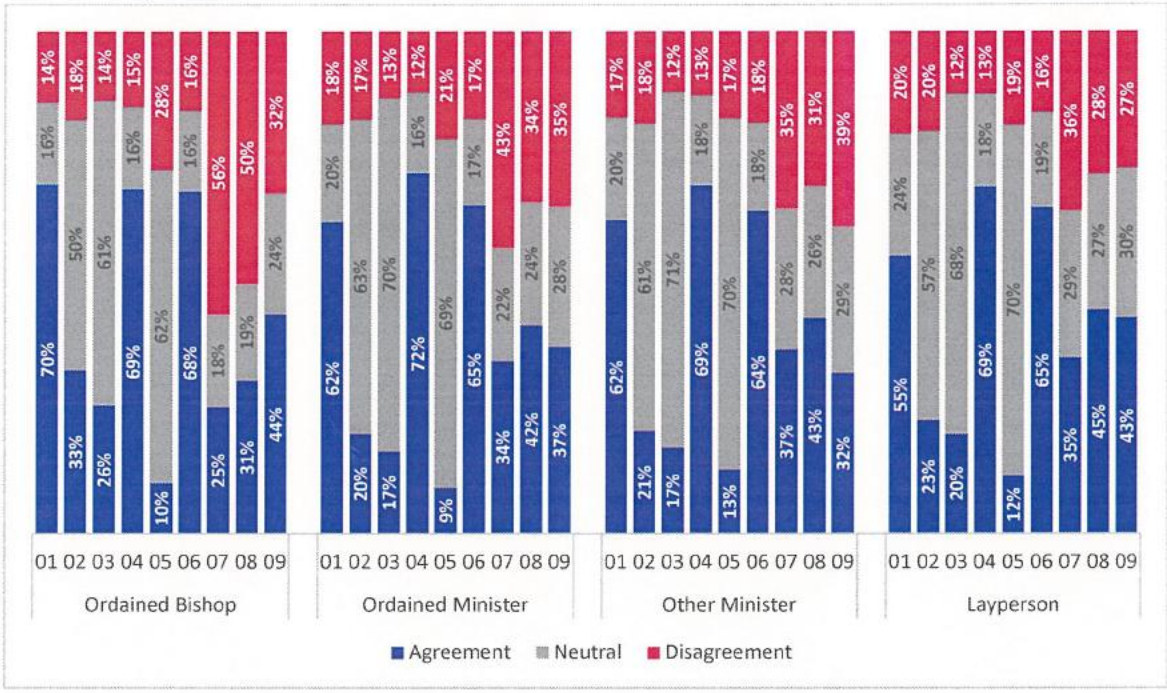
Global Region	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09
1-USA-South	63%	30%	22%	73%	10%	65%	32%	37%	37%
2-USA-Northeast	67%	25%	23%	70%	11%	70%	27%	38%	41%
3-USA-Midwest	60%	27%	19%	74%	9%	65%	31%	34%	34%
4-USA-West	62%	27%	24%	75%	12%	73%	36%	38%	44%
5-Central America	73%	17%	16%	59%	13%	64%	30%	39%	40%
6-South America	74%	15%	12%	58%	10%	65%	29%	39%	51%
7-Canada	69%	21%	19%	66%	18%	74%	35%	35%	40%
8-Mexico	74%	20%	19%	59%	15%	66%	28%	43%	29%
9-Carribean	73%	17%	27%	60%	17%	66%	19%	36%	51%
12-Europe	50%	24%	19%	65%	14%	63%	34%	29%	51%

Respondents from Europe and the United States were less likely to agree that it is important for the Church of God to maintain three distinct ranks of ministry *(ImpUnd_01)*, while this seemed to be more desirable for respondents from Central and South America, Mexico and the Caribbean. Support for reducing the ranks to two levels *(ImpUnd_07)* seemed to be somewhat variable by global region, with USA-West, Canada and Europe indicating the strongest agreement, while respondents from the Caribbean indicating low levels of agreement. Agreement levels to the statement that the ranks have no validity outside of determining whether a person can participate in certain meetings and serve on boards (ImpUnd_08) were fairly uniformed, with respondents from Mexico indicating slightly more agreement and European respondents slightly less.

Respondents from the United States were more likely to agree that the rank of Ordained Bishop was created to satisfy the desire of ministers outside of the USA to have recognizable hierarchy of ranks *(ImpUnd_02)*; interestingly, this item received relatively low levels of agreement from those respondents outside of the USA. Similarly, respondents from Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean were more likely to agree that the ranks primarily came about to satisfy requirements of the IRS *(ImpUnd_05)*, while respondents from the United States were less likely to agree. Respondents from the United States and Caribbean were more likely to agree that the rank of Ordained Minister was primarily created for requirements related to military chaplaincy *(ImpUnd_03)*, particularly when compared to respondents from Central and South America.

Respondents from Canada, the USA-Northeast and USA-West were more likely to agree that the ranks of ministry assure local church congregations that the Church of God is properly evaluating ministerial qualifications *(ImpUnd_06)*, while respondents from South America, the Caribbean and Europe indicated stronger agreement for more rigorous standards for obtaining each rank of ministry (*ImpUnd_09*). Perhaps the biggest differences were related to the statement: Most laity in the Church of God do not understand the three different ranks of ministry *(ImpUnd_04)*. USA respondents were much more likely to indicate agreement to this statement than respondents from other global regions.

4.2.5 Role/Rank



When asked if it is important for the Church of God to maintain three distinct ranks of ministry *(ImpUnd_01)*, Ordained Bishops indicated high levels of agreement (70%) compared to respondents from the other three groups, with laypersons indicating the lowest levels of agreement (55%). Similarly, when asked to rate support for reducing the distinct ranks to two levels *(ImpUnd_07)*, a larger percentage of Ordained Bishops (56%) indicated some form of disagreement, with Ordained Ministers (43%) indicating higher levels of disagreement than Other Ministers (35%) and laypersons (36%). This same pattern was observed on the statement that the distinct ranks have no validity outside of determining whether a person can participate in certain meetings and serve on certain boards *(ImpUnd_08)*; 50% of Ordained Bishops disagreed with this statement, compared to 34% of Ordained Ministers, 31% of Other Ministers, and 28% of laypersons.

Ordained Bishops were more likely to agree that the rank of Ordained Bishop was primarily created to satisfy the desire of ministers outside of the USA to have a recognizable hierarchy of ministry *(ImpUnd_02)* and more likely to agree that the rank of Ordained Minister was primarily created to satisfy requirements of military chaplaincy *(ImpUnd_03)*. They were also more likely to disagree that the ranks primarily came about to satisfy requirements of the United States IRS *(ImpUnd_05)*.

Ordained Ministers (37%) and Other Ministers (32%) were less likely to agree that the standards for obtaining each rank of ministry should be more rigorous in comparison to Ordained Bishops (44%) and Laypersons (43%) *(ImpUnd_09)*.

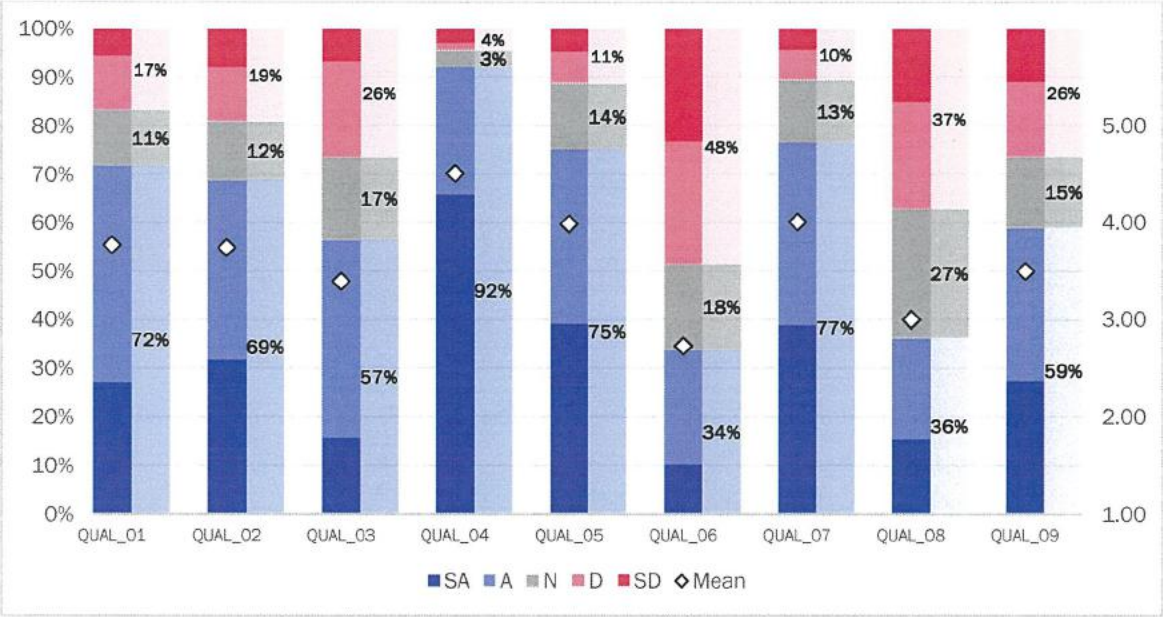
5 QUALIFICATIONS

The Global Ministry Forums survey included nine questions that specifically addressed various aspects of qualifications for ministers in the Church of God. These questions were:

- The qualifications for the three ranks of ministry in the Church of God are sufficient. *(QUAL_01)*
- In order for the Church of God to advance, it must require at least a minimum level of educational training for its ministers. *(QUAL_02)*
- The Ministerial Internship Program (MIP) provides sufficient training for those preparing to serve as pastors in the Church of God. *(QUAL_03)*
- Background checks should be required for all potential ministers prior to engaging in any ministerial training activity that leads to credentials with the Church of God. *(QUAL_04)*
- Background checks on Church of God credentialed ministers should be conducted at least every 5 years. *(QUAL_05)*
- Ministers should be required to renew their ministerial credentials periodically by filing an application. *(QUAL_06)*
- Ministers should be required to engage in "continuing education" programs that address issues such as church budgeting/finance, tax changes, personal development, etc. *(QUAL_07)*
- The Church of God will not experience growth until the qualifications required for being in ministry are strengthened. *(QUAL_08)*
- Ministers with the rank of Ordained Minister should be allowed to participate in the International General Council. *(QUAL_09)*

5.1 FREQUENCIES AND MEANS FOR ALL RESPONDENTS

On average, these questions yielded 6,155 responses, with little variance around this number. Graphical representation of frequencies and mean scores for all respondents are provided below. For each question, frequencies of Likert-scaled responses are presented, with blue indicating various levels of agreement and red indicating various levels disagreement. Means are represented by a diamond-shape. In addition to the full Likert-scale response set, SA and A are combined to identify an agreement band, as well as SD and D to indicate a disagreement band. Narrative descriptions follow.



Seventy-two percent of all respondents agreed the qualifications for the three ranks of ministry in the Church of God are sufficient *(Qual_01)*; just 17% of all respondents showed some form of disagreement with this statement (mean: 3.77, 1.13). Among respondents, nearly equal numbers of respondents indicated agreement and disagreement that the Church of God *will not* experience growth until qualifications required for being in ministry are strengthened *(Qual_08)*; 37% indicated some form of disagreement while 36% indicated agreement (mean: 3.00, sd: 1.28).

A couple of items in this sub-scale addressed the role of education in qualifying ministers. When asked if the Church of God must require at least a minimum level of educational training for its ministers in order to advance *(Qual_02)*, 69% of respondents agreed, while just 19% indicated some form of disagreement (mean: 3.74, sd: 1.24). When asked specifically if the Ministerial Internship Program (MIP) provides sufficient training for those preparing to serve as pastors in the Church of God *(Qual_03)*, 57% of respondents agreed, 26% disagreed, and 17% had a neutral response (mean: 3.39, sd: 1.16).

There was tremendous consensus among all respondents that background checks should be required for all potential ministers prior to engaging in any ministerial training activity that leads to credentials *(Qual_04)*. This was the most agreed upon item on the entire survey, with 92% favorability among all respondents (mean: 4.51, sd: 0.87). When asked about whether background checks on Church of God credentialed ministers should be conducted at least every 5 years, the numbers were slightly less favorable, but still strong *(Qual_05)*; 75% of respondents indicated some form of support for this requirement, while 11% indicated disagreement (mean: 3.99, sd: 1.10).

In addition to background checks, a couple of items in this sub-scale addressed various ongoing requirements for ministers. One item asked respondents to evaluate the following statement: Ministers should be required to renew their ministerial credentials periodically by filing an application *(Qual_06)*. Among respondents, 48% disagreed with this requirement, while 34% of respondents indicated agreement (mean: 2.73, sd: 1.32). While support for this requirement was rather low, 77% of respondents indicated that ministers should be required to engage in "continuing education" programs that address issues such as church budgeting/finance, tax changes, personal development, etc. *(Qual_07)*. Only 10% of respondents disagreed with this statement in some way (mean: 4.01, sd: 1.08).

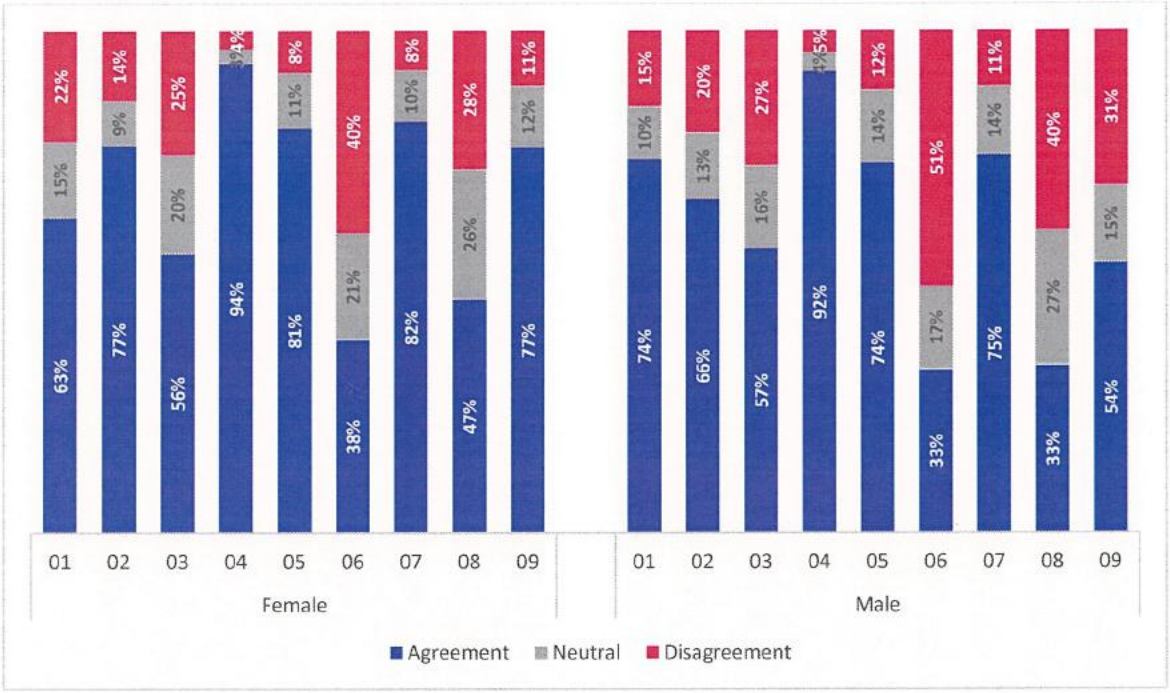
The final question of this sub-scale asked respondents to consider the following statement: Ministers with the rank of Ordained Minister should be allowed to participate in the International General Council *(Qual_09)*. Among respondents, 59% indicated some level of agreement, while 26% indicated some form of disagreement (mean: 3.49, sd: 1.33).

For a more detailed breakdown of item responses, see Appendix III (Means and Standard Deviations – All Respondents) and Appendix IV (Frequency Distributions – All Respondents).

5.2 Frequencies by Respondent Demographics

To better understand these data, a categorical analysis was conducted based on 5 demographic characteristics of respondents: gender, age, education, global region, and role/rank. For this analysis, SA and A were combined as agreement and SD and D were combined as disagreement. Frequencies are provided below in graphical representation with a narrative description following. *See Appendix V for item-level means and standard deviations by sub-group.*

5.2.1 Gender

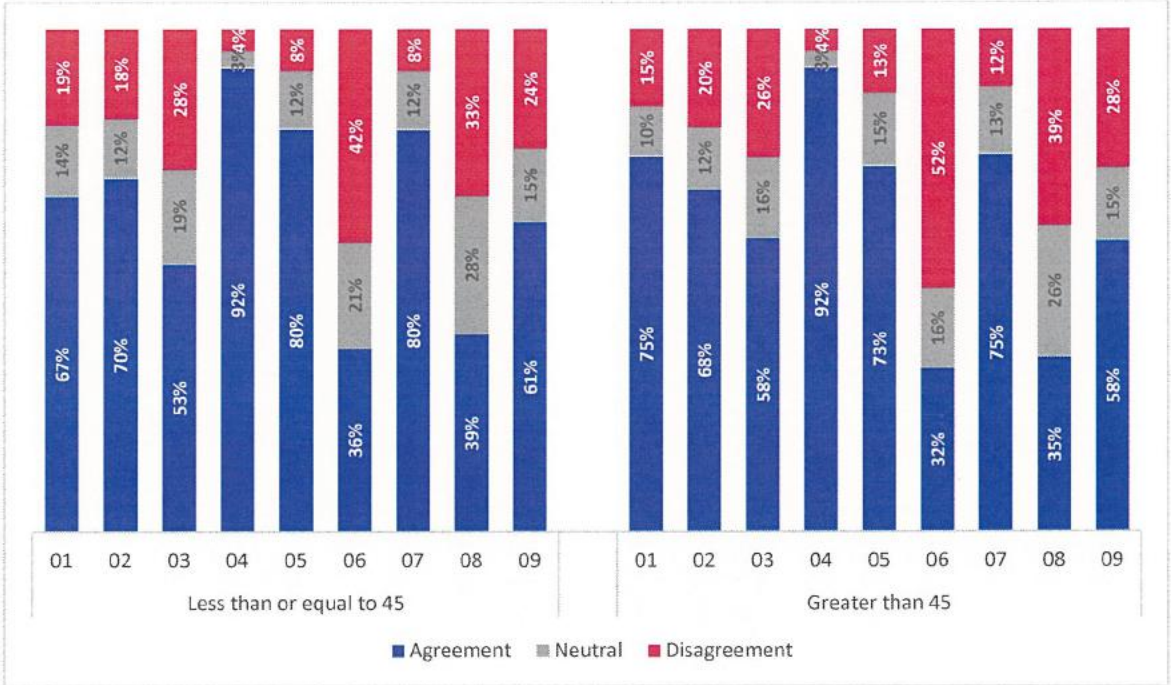


Male respondents indicated stronger agreement with the statement that the three ranks of ministry in the Church of God are sufficient (74% vs 63% female) *(Qual_01)*, while female respondents were more likely to indicate a neutral or negative response. Both females and males showed strong support for a requirement that all potential ministers receive background checks prior to engaging in any ministerial training activity that leads to credentials *(Qual_04)*. 81% of female respondents indicated agreement for periodic background checks on Church of God credentialed ministers *(Qual_05)*, while 74% of male respondents indicated agreement.

In all other areas, with the exception of the MIP item *(Qual_03)*, female respondents indicated slightly more agreement than male respondents. 77% of females agreed or strongly agreed that in order for the Church of God to advance, it must require at least a minimum level of education training *(Qual_02)*. Agreement among male respondents for that same item was 66%. Females indicated slightly more agreement (38% vs 33% males) that ministers should be required to renew their ministerial credentials periodically through an application *(Qual_06)*; 51% of males and 40% of females disagreed with this statement. Support for a "continuing education" requirement for ministers *(Qual_07)* was stronger for females (82% vs 75% males). Females provided stronger support (47% vs 33% males) for the statement that the Church of God will not experience growth until the qualifications required for being in ministry are strengthened *(Qual_08)*.

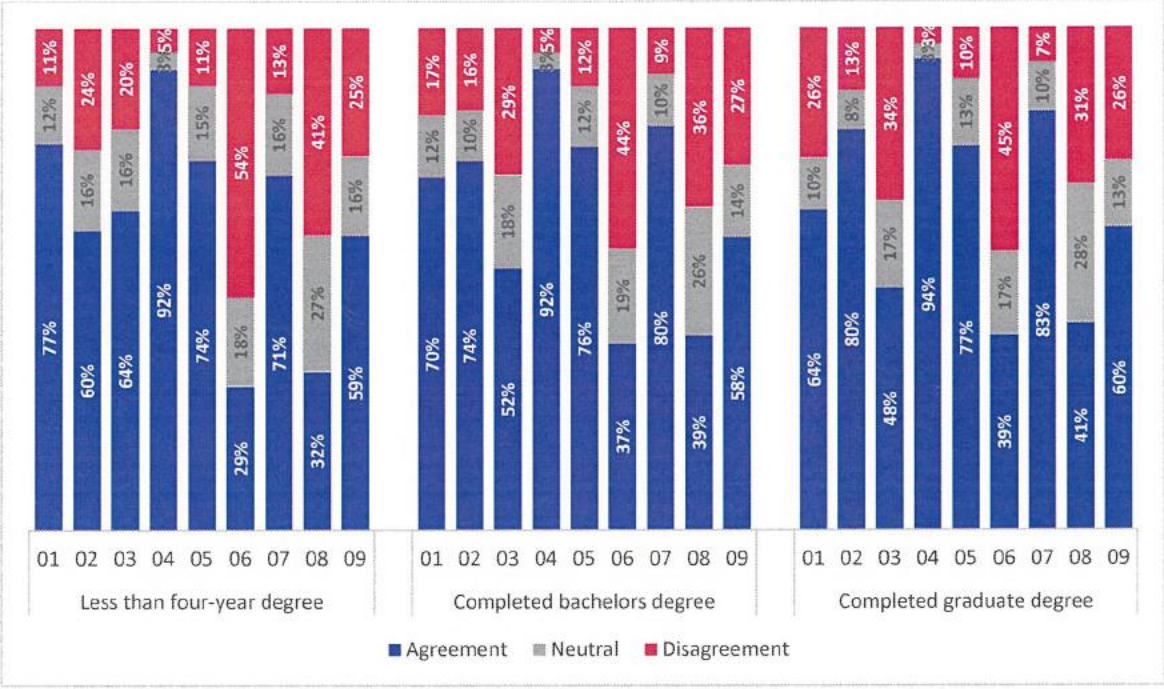
The biggest difference between females and males was related to the item: Ministers with the rank of Ordained Minister should be allowed to participate in the International General Council *(Qual_09)*. Among female respondents, 77% agreed or strongly agreed, compared to 54% of male respondents.

5.2.2 Age



Strong support existed among respondents from all ages for a requirement that all potential ministers receive background checks prior to engaging in any ministerial training activity that leads to credentials *(Qual_04)*. Older respondents were more likely to agree that qualifications for the three ranks of ministry are sufficient *(Qual_01)*, and they were slightly more likely to perceive the Ministerial Internship (MIP) program as providing sufficient training for those preparing to serve in ministry *(Qual_03)*. Younger respondents were slightly more likely to agree with the remaining items *(Qual_05, Qual_06, Qual_07, Qual_08 and Qual_09)*, while older respondents were slightly more likely to disagree. Of particular note, 52% of older respondents indicated some form of disagreement with the statement that ministers should be required to renew their ministerial credentials periodically by filing an application *(Qual_06)*.

5.2.3 Education



Education appeared to be a factor in responses for six of the nine items in the Qualifications sub-scale. In two of these items, agreement decreased as level of education increased. When asked if the qualifications for the three ranks of ministry in the Church of God are sufficient *(Qual_01)*, 77% of those without a four-year degree agreed, compared to 70% of those with completed four-year degrees and 64% of those with complete graduate degrees. Similarly, 64% of those with less than a four-year degree indicated the Ministerial Internship Program (MIP) provides sufficient training for those preparing to serve as pastors *(Qual_03)*, compared to 52% of those with completed four-year degrees and 48% of those with completed graduate degrees.

Three items received incrementally higher agreement rates according to education level. 60% of respondents with less than a four-year degree agreed that in order for the Church of God to advance, it must require at least a minimum level of educational training for ministers *(Qual_02)*. This compares to 74% among those completing a four-year degree, and 80% of those completing graduate degrees. In terms of a "continuing education" requirement *(Qual_07)*, 71% of those without a four-year degree indicated support, compared to 80% of four-year degree earners and 83% of those with completed graduate degrees. Similarly, 32% of respondents without a four-year degree indicated agreement that the Church of God will not experience growth until the qualifications required for ministry are strengthened *(Qual_08)*. This compares to 39% for those with four-year degrees and 41% of those who have completed graduate degrees. On the other end of the scale, those without a four-year degree (54% vs ~44% of others) were more likely to disagree that ministers should be required to renew their credentials through periodic application *(Qual_06)*.

For the other two items *(Qual_04, Qual_05)*, the distribution of responses was fairly equal between groups.

5.2.4 Global Region

Graphically representing responses according to global region is difficult due to the number of regions and number of questions. In order to visualize the data, color scales are provided for each question according to global region, where darker blue indicates more *agreement* and darker red less. Responses from Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Oceania were removed due to small response sizes.

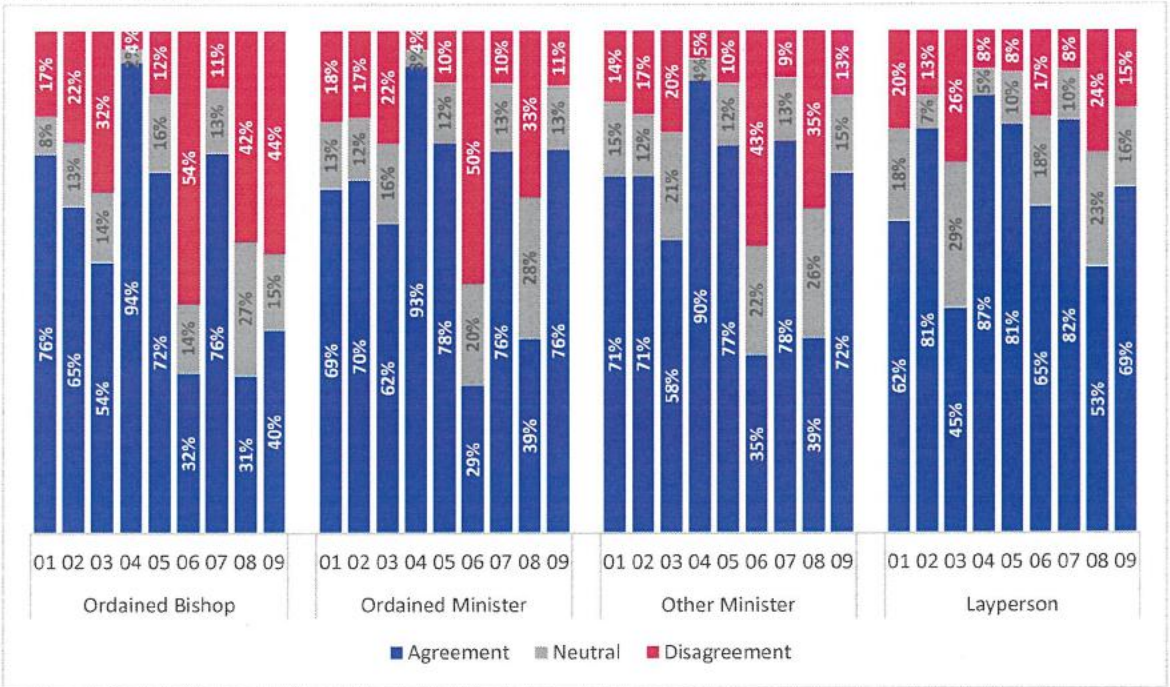
Global Region	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09
1-USA-South	73%	63%	59%	95%	75%	29%	72%	31%	52%
2-USA-Northeast	73%	72%	62%	95%	78%	32%	80%	38%	64%
3-USA-Midwest	71%	65%	54%	95%	77%	26%	73%	27%	53%
4-USA-West	72%	74%	62%	95%	78%	33%	79%	37%	59%
5-Central America	66%	75%	44%	82%	74%	48%	82%	52%	70%
6-South America	69%	80%	42%	82%	73%	51%	85%	53%	72%
7-Canada	75%	81%	64%	94%	75%	33%	88%	42%	76%
8-Mexico	78%	77%	51%	79%	64%	57%	85%	43%	75%
9-Carribean	73%	78%	45%	87%	77%	37%	87%	40%	69%
12-Europe	63%	82%	61%	88%	73%	47%	84%	39%	61%

Respondents from the United States were less likely to agree on a number of items related to the Qualifications of ministers in comparison to respondents from outside of the United States. They were generally less likely to agree to the following: a minimum level of educational training for ministers *(Qual_02)*, periodic renewal of ministerial credentials *(Qual_06)*, a "continuing education" requirement *(Qual_07)*, and the strengthening of qualifications in order for the Church to experience growth *(Qual_08)*. In addition, respondents from the United States were less agreeable that Ordained Ministers should be allowed to participate in the International General Council *(Qual_09)*, along with respondents from Europe.

Respondents from the United States and Canada were overwhelmingly in support of background checks for all potential ministers prior to engaging in any ministerial training activity *(Qual_04)*.

There were a few other regional differences in the responses: respondents from Europe were less likely to agree that qualifications for the three ranks of ministry are sufficient *(Qual_01)*; respondents from Central and South America, the Caribbean and Mexico were less likely to agree that the Ministerial Internship Program (MIP) provides sufficient training for those preparing to serve as pastors *(Qual_03)*, and respondents from Mexico were less likely to agree to periodic checks for credentialed ministers *(Qual_05)*.

5.2.5 Role/Rank



It was observed that Laypersons were generally more favorable for certain qualifications and periodic checks for credentialed ministers than respondents from the three ministerial groups. Laypersons indicated higher levels of agreement with the following items: a minimum level of educational training for ministers *(Qual_02)*, periodic background checks of credentialed ministers *(Qual_05)*, periodic renewal requirement for credentialed ministers *(Qual_06)*, a "continuing education" requirement *(Qual_07)*, and the strengthening of qualifications in order for the Church to experience growth *(Qual_08)*. They were less likely to agree (62%) that the qualifications for the three ranks of ministry in the Church of God are sufficient *(Qual_01)*, while Ordained Bishops were the most agreeable on this item (76%).

Ordained Ministers were more likely to indicate agreement that the Ministerial Internship Program (MIP) provides sufficient training for those preparing to serve as pastors in the Church of God *(Qual_03)*, while Laypersons had higher levels of neutral responses on this item and Ordained Bishops were more likely to disagree.

Ordained Bishops were far more likely to disagree with the following statement: Ministers with the rank of Ordained Minister should be allowed to participate in the International General Council *(Qual_09)*; just 40% of Ordained Bishops agreed or strongly agreed to this statement, compared to 69% of laypersons, 76% of Ordained Ministers and 72% of Other Ministers.

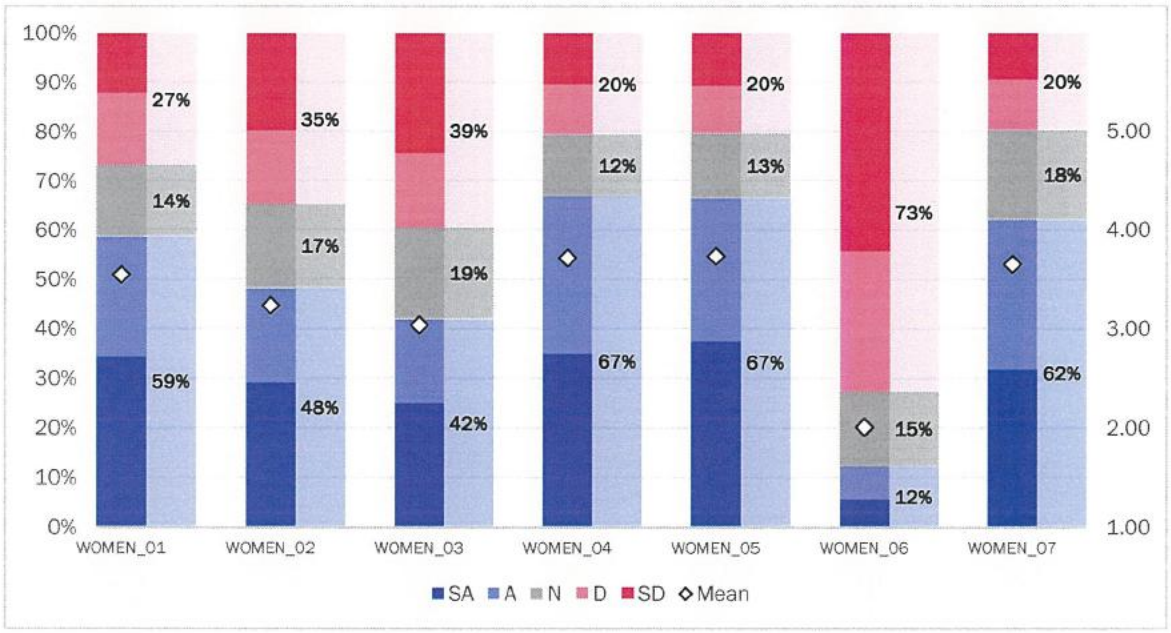
6 WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

The Global Ministry Forums survey included seven questions that specifically addressed various aspects of Women in Leadership Positions. These questions were:

- Women should be allowed to participate in all levels of ministry in the Church of God. *(Women_01)*
- Women should be allowed to obtain the rank of Ordained Bishop in the Church of God. *(Women_02)*
- Women should be allowed to serve as Administrative Bishops. *(Women_03)*
- Women should be allowed to serve on State/Regional Councils. *(Women_04)*
- Women should be allowed to participate in the International General Council. *(Women_05)*
- It is un-Biblical for women to participate in any denominational leadership role. *(Women_06)*
- Women would bring a healthy perspective to the direction of the Church of God if allowed to serve in all denominational leadership roles. *(Women_07)*

6.1 FREQUENCIES AND MEANS FOR ALL RESPONDENTS

On average, these questions yielded 6,165 responses, with little variance around this number. Frequencies and mean scores for all respondents are provided below in graphical representation. For each question, frequencies of Likert-scaled responses are presented, with blue indicating various levels of agreement and red indicating various levels disagreement. Means are represented by a diamond-shape. In addition to the full Likert-scale response set, SA and A are combined to identify an agreement band, as well as SD and D to indicate a disagreement band. These are also presented in the graph below followed by narrative description.



When asked if it is un-biblical for women to participate in any denominational leadership role *(Women_06)*, 73% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 12% indicated some form of agreement (mean: 2.01, sd: 1.17). This question, while receiving the most consensus from all respondents, was written from the negative pole; as a result, the responses indicate much higher levels of disagreement than the other questions in this sub-scale.

When asked more specifically about women serving and participating in various positions of church leadership, the responses varied depending on the role. Across all respondents, 67% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that women should be allowed to participate in the International General Council, while 20% indicated some form of disagreement. The results were nearly identical when asked if women should be allowed to serve on State/Regional Councils. Agreement dropped to 59% when asked if women should be allowed to serve in all levels of ministry, and even further when asked specifically if they should be allowed to obtain the rank of Ordained Bishop (48%) or Administrative Bishop (42%). Agreement levels and means for each of these positions are provided below, in descending order of agreement.

Leadership Role	Agreement (SA/A)	Disagreement (SD/D)	Mean	SD
International General Council *(Women_05)*	67%	20%	3.73	1.33
State/Regional Councils *(Women_04)*	67%	20%	3.71	1.32
All Levels of Ministry *(Women_01)*	59%	27%	3.54	1.40
Rank of Ordained Bishop *(Women_02)*	48%	35%	3.23	1.50
Administrative Bishop *(Women_03)*	42%	39%	3.04	1.51

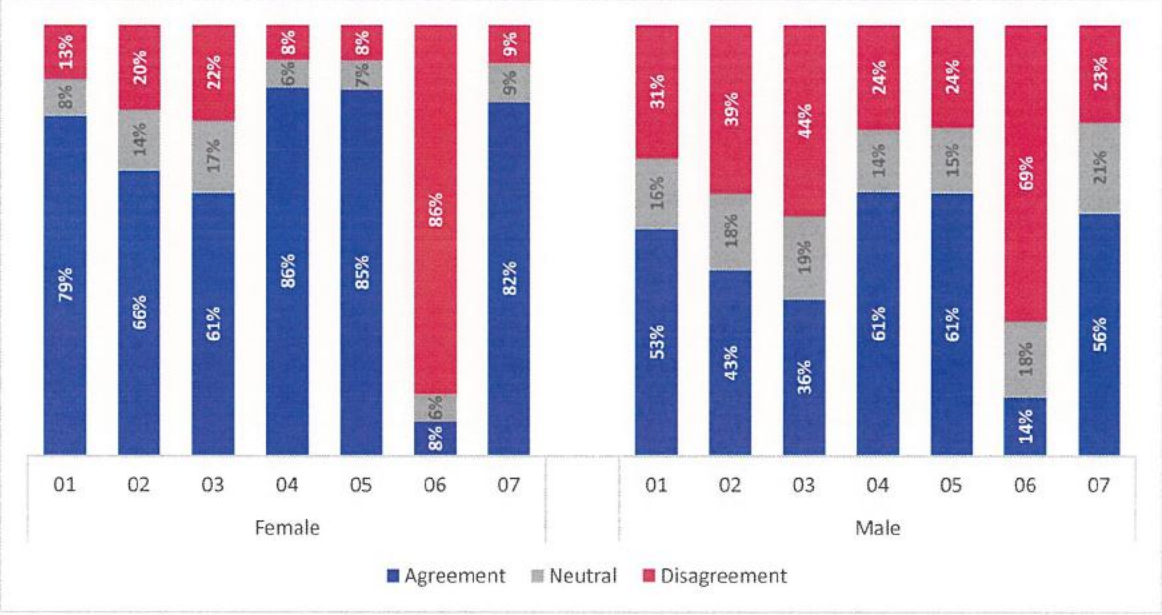
A final question asked if women would bring a healthy perspective to the direction of the Church of God if allowed to serve in all denominational leadership roles *(Women_07)*; 62% of all respondents indicated some form of agreement, while 20% indicated disagreement (mean: 3.65, sd: 1.28).

For a more detailed breakdown of item responses, see Appendix III (Means and Standard Deviations – All Respondents) and Appendix IV (Frequency Distributions – All Respondents).

6.2 Frequencies by Respondent Demographics

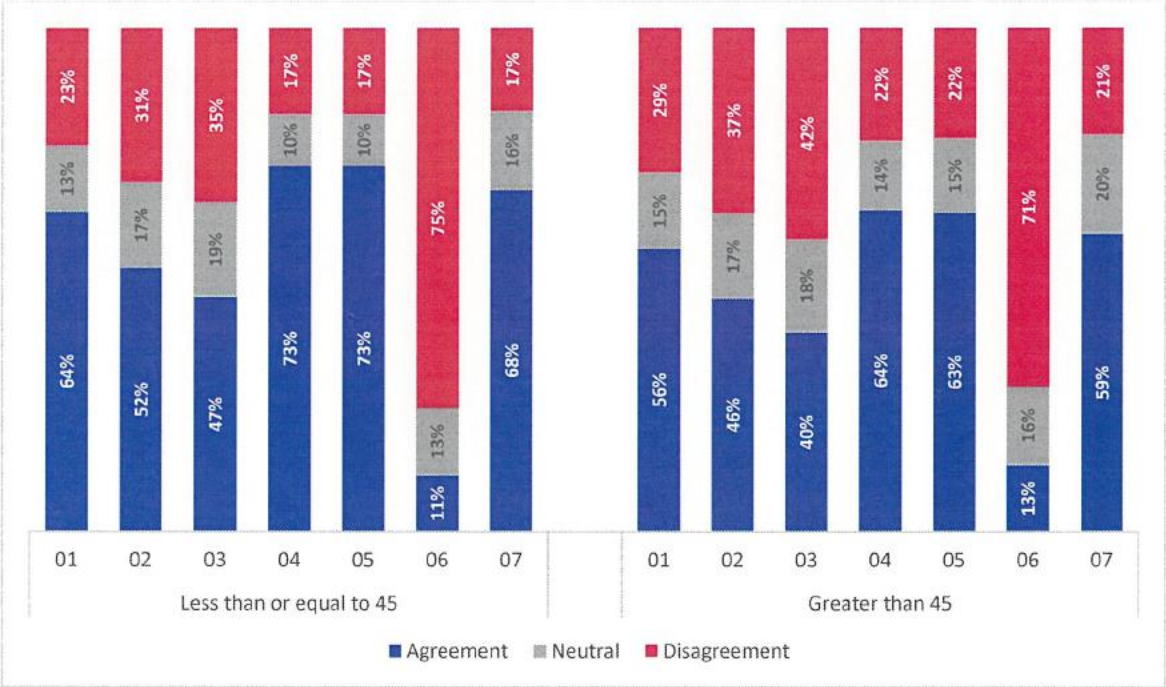
To better understand these data, a categorical analysis was conducted based on 5 demographic characteristics of respondents: gender, age, education, global region, and role/rank. For this analysis, SA and A were combined as agreement and SD and D were combined as disagreement. Frequencies are provided below in graphical representation with a narrative description following. *See Appendix V for item-level means and standard deviations by sub-group.*

6.2.1 Gender



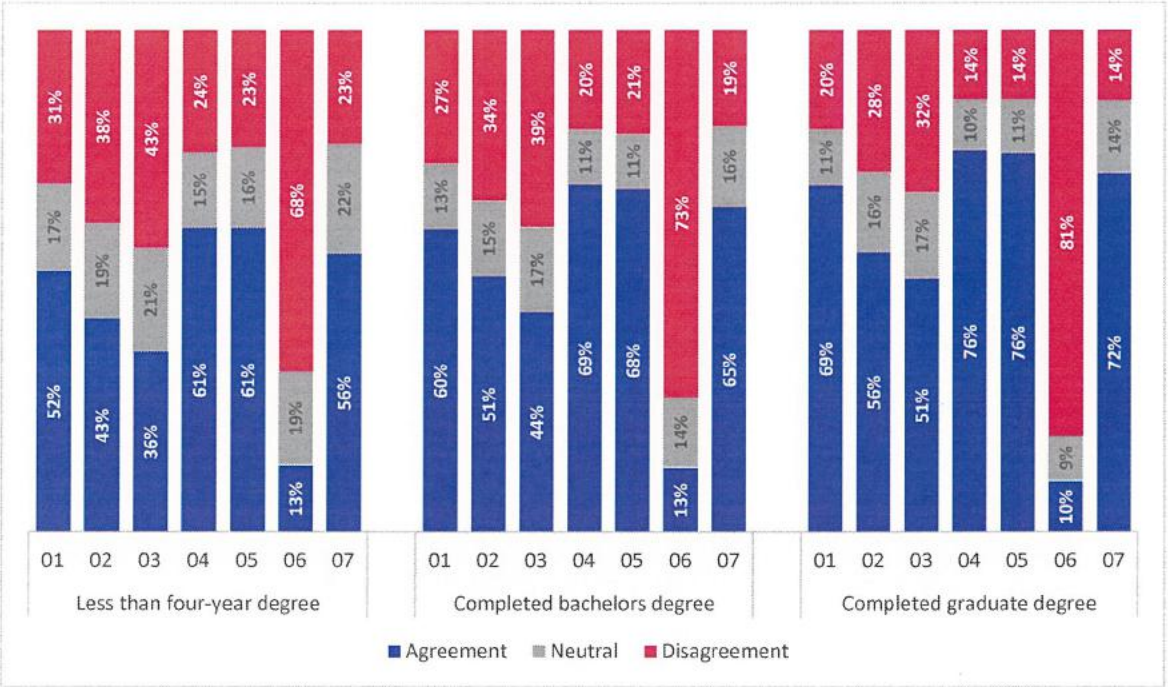
Female respondents were generally more supportive of statements related to Women in Leadership Positions than male respondents. Across each question, there was approximately a 25% difference in agreement between female respondents and male respondents. When asked if women should be able to participate in the International General Council *(Women_05)* and State/Regional Councils *(Women_04)*, over 85% of females indicated agreement on these two questions, compared to 61% of male respondents. Nearly 80% of female respondents indicated agreement that women should be allowed to participate in all levels of ministry in the Church of God *(Women_01)*, compared to 53% of males. When asked about specific positions, 66% of women agreed women should be able to hold the position of Ordained Bishop *(Women_02)* and 61% indicated agreement that women should be allowed to serve as Administrative Bishops *(Women_03)*, compared to 43% and 36% of males, respectively. Women indicated strong consensus in their disagreement (86%) that it is un-biblical for women to participate in any denominational role *(Women_06)*, compared to 69% of males. Female respondents indicated more agreement (82%) that women would bring a healthy perspective to the direction of the Church if allowed to serve in denominational roles *(Women_07)*, compared to 56% of males.

6.2.2 Age



Respondents less than or equal to the age of 45 were generally more likely to agree with statements about Women in Leadership Positions than respondents over the age of 45. While the differences in agreement by Age sub-groups were less than differences by Gender, the general pattern of agreement on the various questions held true.

6.2.3 Education



Education also appeared to be a factor in determining agreement with statements related to Women in Leadership Positions. In all questions, respondents with completed graduate degrees indicated higher levels of agreement with these items than those with completed four-year degrees, and those with four-year degrees indicated higher levels than those without degrees. For instance, when asked if women should be allowed to participate in all levels of ministry in the Church of God *(Women_01)*, 69% of those with a completed graduate degree indicated agreement, compared to 60% of those with a completed bachelor's degree and 52% of those with less than a four-year degree. This pattern repeated on all questions in this sub-scale.

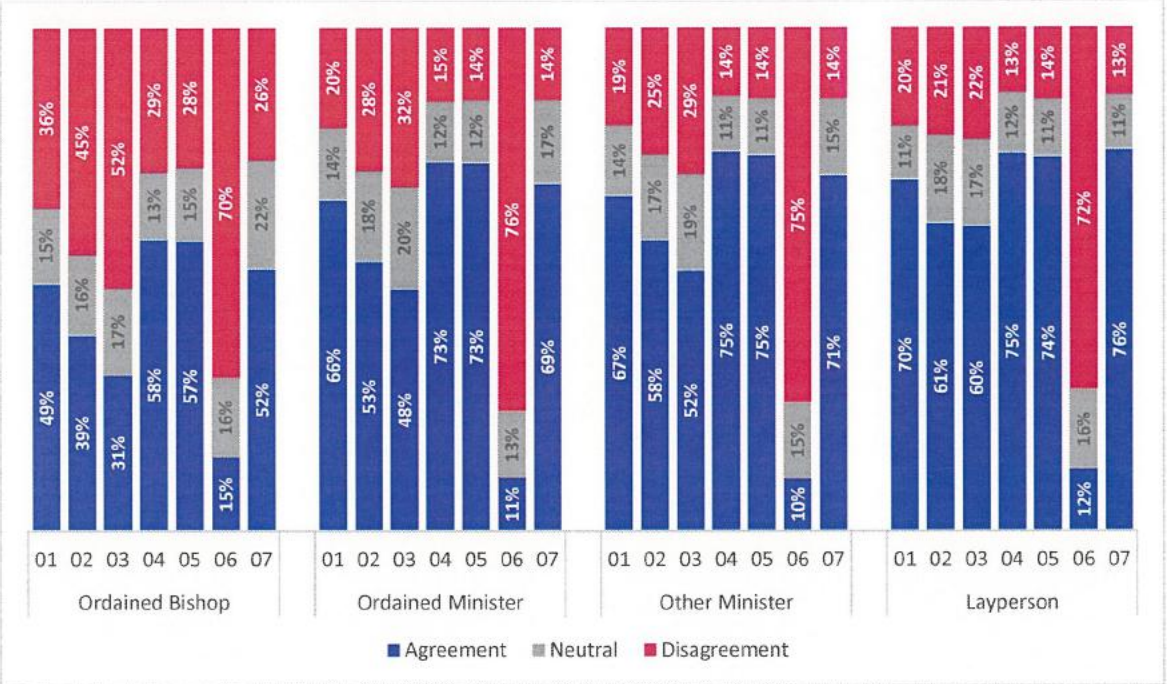
6.2.4 Global Region

Graphically representing responses according to global region is difficult due to the number of regions and number of questions. In order to visualize the data, color scales are provided for each question according to global region, where darker blue indicates more *agreement* and darker red less. Responses from Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Oceania were removed due to small response sizes.

Global Region	01	02	03	04	05	06*	07
USA-South	53%	43%	34%	61%	61%	72%	56%
USA-Northeast	62%	45%	40%	69%	70%	75%	65%
USA-Midwest	55%	45%	36%	65%	65%	75%	57%
USA-West	64%	55%	48%	71%	74%	76%	66%
Central America	70%	63%	60%	76%	73%	72%	75%
South America	69%	63%	63%	79%	75%	73%	75%
Canada	74%	59%	55%	78%	81%	79%	79%
Mexico	60%	56%	57%	75%	69%	61%	68%
Caribbean	66%	56%	59%	74%	72%	72%	69%
Europe	76%	63%	61%	84%	80%	82%	73%

Because the statement that it is un-biblical for women to participate in any denominational leadership role *(Women_06)* was written from the negative pole, the values presented in the chart above were flipped to disagreement and strong disagreement to maintain the visual integrity of the color scale. For this question in particular, respondents across global regions were generally in consensus with one exception; respondents from Mexico indicated a lower level of disagreement with this statement. Generally, respondents from the USA indicated lower levels of agreement with the statements about Women in Leadership Positions than those from other global regions, and that was most pronounced for respondents from the Southern and Midwest regions of the United States. Respondents from Europe indicated the highest percentage of agreement with questions in this sub-scale, followed by those respondents from Central and South America. Canadian respondents seemed to indicate strong agreement for women in leadership roles in general; however, these higher comparative levels of agreement disappeared for Canadian respondents when asked if women should be allowed to serve as Administrative Bishops *(Women_03)*. Respondents from the Caribbean and Mexico fell somewhere in between the above mentioned sub-groups in terms of agreement.

6.2.5 Role/Rank



Responses among Ordained Bishops to questions about Women in Leadership Positions differed from those with other roles/rank who responded to this survey. For each question in this sub-scale, the percentage of Ordained Bishops indicating agreement was approximately 17% less than respondents from other roles/rank. Laypersons who responded to this survey were the most in agreement with questions in this sub-scale in nearly all instances; however, their responses closely aligned with ministers who are not Ordained Bishops.

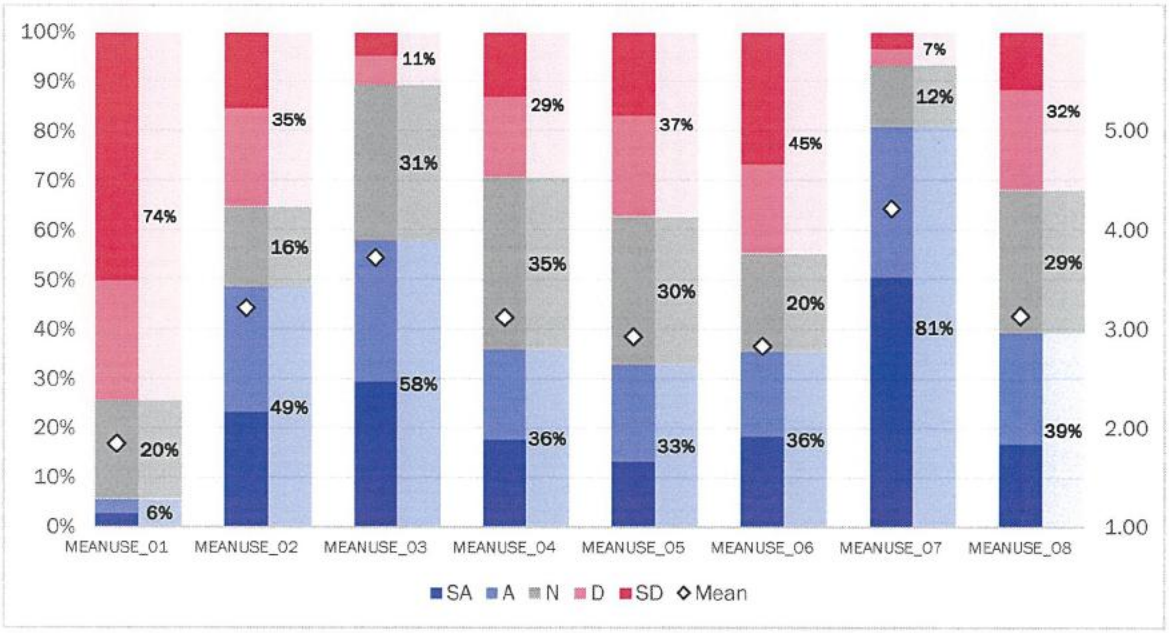
7 ATTENTION UPON THE MEANING AND USAGE OF THE TERM BISHOP

The Global Ministry Forums survey included eight questions related to the meaning and use of the term *Bishop*. These questions were:

- The title of Bishop is offensive to me. *(MEANUSE_01)*
- The title of Bishop should be reserved only for those in a leadership role over other pastors, such as Administrative Bishop (for State/Regional Overseers) or Presiding Bishop (General Overseer). *(MEANUSE_02)*
- I do not use the title Bishop in my everyday role as a pastor. *(MEANUSE_03)*
- I prefer the title Ordained Minister rather than the title Ordained Bishop. *(MEANUSE_04)*
- It is important that we use the title Bishop so that we have equal status with ministers from other denominations that use the title Bishop. *(MEANUSE_05)*
- Women should be excluded from obtaining the title of Bishop due to the biblical definition of this position. *(MEANUSE_06)*
- The debate over the title Bishop needs to be resolved so that the Church of God can move on from this issue. *(MEANUSE_07)*
- I do not use the title Bishop to my friends from other denominations when referring to the highest rank of ministry in the Church of God. *(MEANUSE_08)*

7.1 FREQUENCIES AND MEANS FOR ALL RESPONDENTS

Frequencies and mean scores for all respondents are provided below in graphical representation. For each question, frequencies of Likert-scaled responses are presented, with blue indicating various levels of agreement and red indicating various levels disagreement. Means are represented by a diamond-shape. In addition to the full Likert-scale response set, SA and A are combined to identify an agreement band, as well as SD and D to indicate a disagreement band. These are also presented in the graph below followed by narrative description.



Respondents were asked to evaluate the following statement: The debate over the title *Bishop* needs to be resolved so that the Church of God can move on from this issue *(MeanUse_07)*. Among all respondents, 81% either agreed or strongly agreed that the issue needs to be resolved, while 7% indicated some form of disagreement with this statement (mean: 4.21, sd: 1.01). Only one other item on the Global Forums Survey yielded agreement levels higher than this item. Respondents also demonstrated strong consensus on a second item in this sub-scale; although, consensus was in the form of disagreement. When asked if the title of *Bishop* is offensive to me *(MeanUse_01)*, 74% of respondents disagreed and only 6% agreed (mean: 1.84, sd: 1.02).

Among all respondents, 58% indicated they do not use the title *Bishop* in their everyday role *(MeanUse_03)*, while 11% indicated they do use the title (mean: 3.72, sd: 1.09). When asked if respondents preferred the title Ordained *Minister* to the title Ordained *Bishop* *(MeanUse_04)*, responses were flatly distributed; 36% indicated agreement, 35% responded with a neutral position, and 29% indicated disagreement (mean: 3.12, sd: 1.25). Similarly, responses were fairly evenly distributed when respondents were asked if they use the title *Bishop* to refer to the highest rank of ministry in the Church of God when talking to friends outside of the denomination (39% indicated agreement, 29% indicated a neutral response, and 32% indicated disagreement) *(MeanUse_08)* (mean: 3.13, sd: 1.25). In a related question, respondents were split when evaluating the importance of the title *Bishop* in demonstrating equal status with ministers from other denominations that use the title *(MeanUse_05)*; 33% agreed it was important, 30% had no opinion, and 37% indicated disagreement (mean: 2.92, sd: 1.26).

When asked if the title *Bishop* should be reserved for leadership roles such as Administrative Bishop and Presiding Bishop *(MeanUse_02)*, 49% agreed or strongly agreed, while 35% disagreed or strongly disagreed (mean: 3.21, sd: 1.40). Again, this represents quite a bit of variability among respondents, with a somewhat more bi-polar response than the previous set of questions.

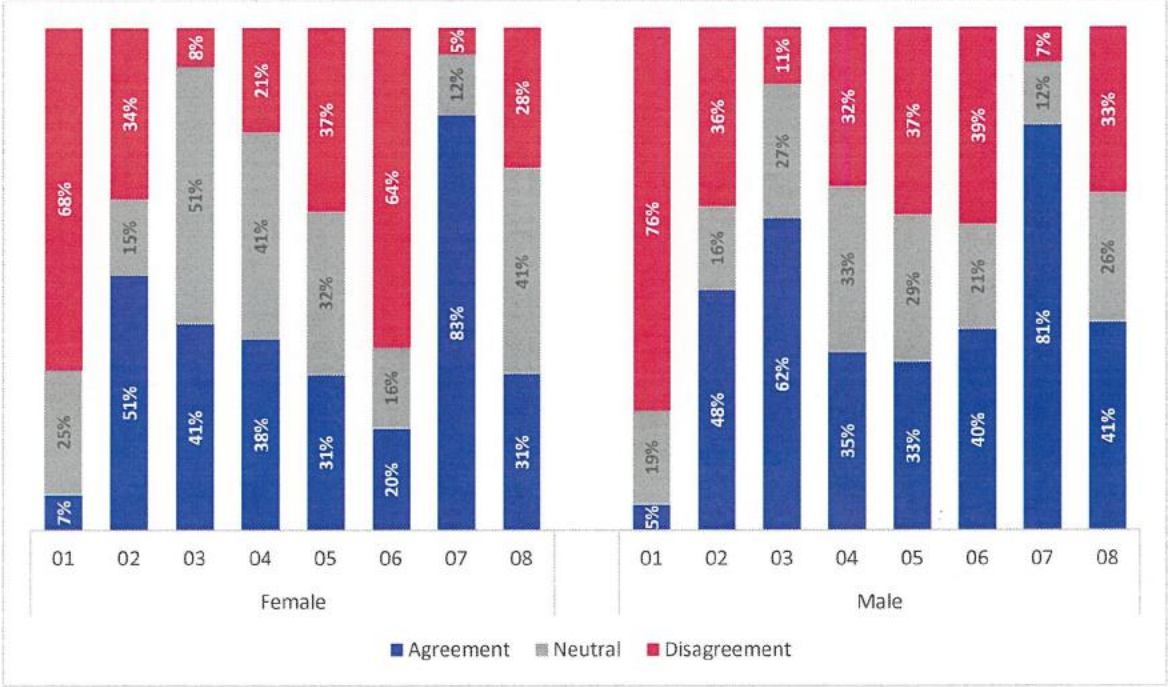
When asked if women should be excluded from obtaining the title *Bishop* due to the biblical definition of the position *(MeanUse_06)*, responses were once again varied; 36% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, while 45% disagreed or strongly disagreed (mean: 2.83, sd: 1.46).

For a more detailed breakdown of item responses, see Appendix III (Means and Standard Deviations – All Respondents) and Appendix IV (Frequency Distributions – All Respondents).

7.2 Frequencies by Respondent Demographics

To better understand these data, a categorical analysis was conducted based on 5 demographic characteristics of respondents: gender, age, education, global region, and role/rank. For this analysis, SA and A were combined as agreement and SD and D were combined as disagreement. Frequencies are provided below in graphical representation with a narrative description following. *See Appendix V for item-level means and standard deviations by sub-group.*

7.2.1 Gender



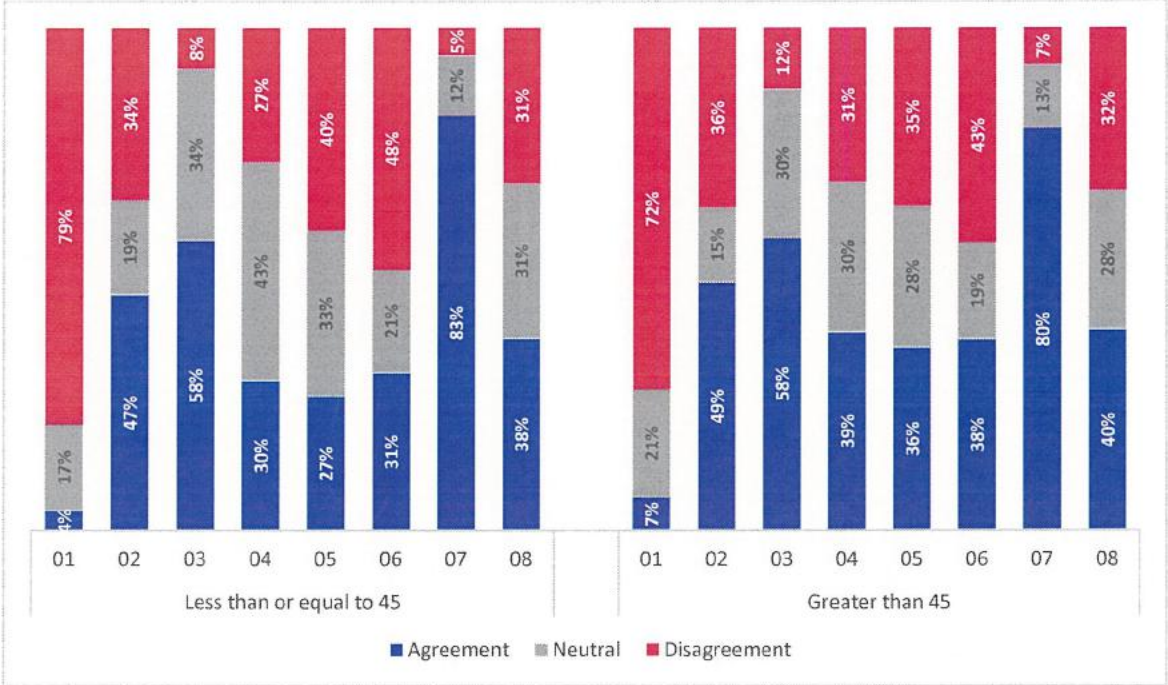
The biggest difference between female and male respondents for this sub-scale was related to women being able to obtain the title of *Bishop* *(MeanUse_06)*; 64% of female respondents indicated disagreement that women should be excluded from obtaining the title due to the Biblical definition of this position, compared to just 39% of males. On the other side of the same question, 40% of male respondents agreed with this statement, while only 20% of females indicated some form of agreement.

Males indicated higher levels of disagreement with the statement that the title *Bishop* is offensive *(MeanUse_01)*; 76% of male respondents indicated some form of disagreement with this statement compared to 68% among female respondents. Agreement levels were fairly similar between Genders for this same question, with more females responding in a neutral position.

Several of the questions were worded in a way that might assume respondents already hold the title *Ordained Bishop* *(MeanUse_03, MeanUse_08)*, so any differences by Gender are likely an artifact of this fact. Similarly, when asked if respondents prefer the title Ordained *Minister* to Ordained *Bishop* *(MeanUse_04)*, males were slightly more likely to indicate disagreement. Again, this might be an artifact of the fact that women are excluded from obtaining the title Ordained *Bishop*.

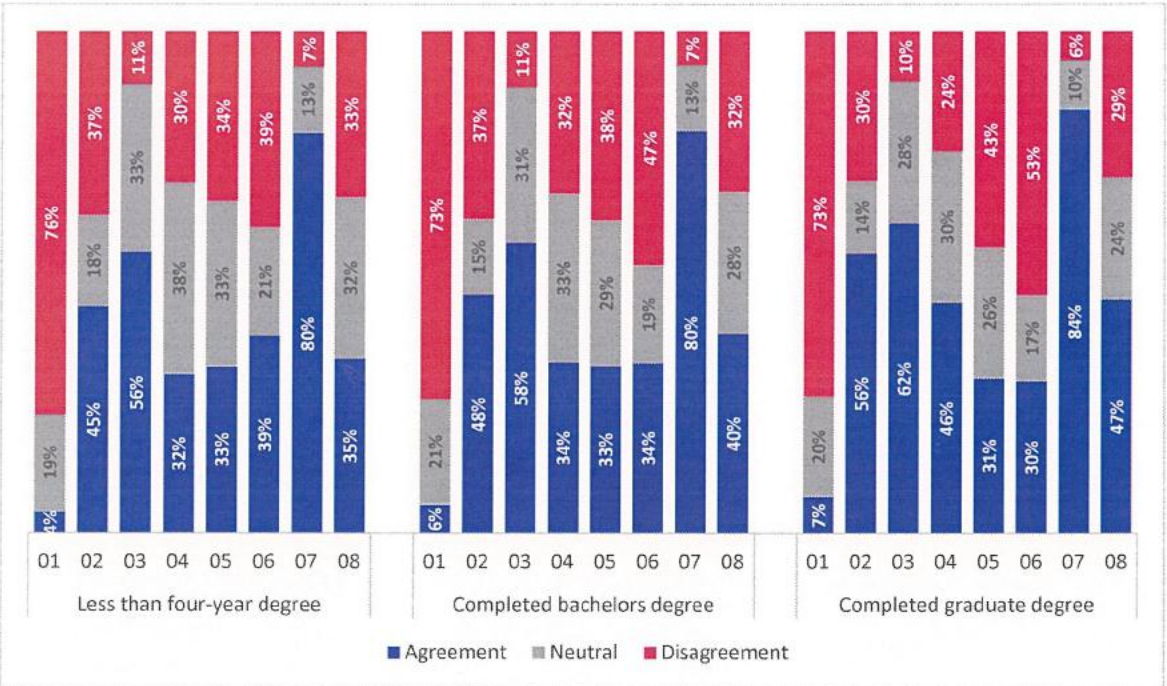
Consensus existed between females and males in both agreement and distribution that the debate over the title *Bishop* should be resolved so that the Church of God can move on *(MeanUse_07)*; as well, distributions of responses were fairly similar between females and males regarding the statement that the term *Bishop* should be reserved for those in leadership roles over other pastors *(MeanUse_02)*.

7.2.2 Age



Age did not seem to be a significant factor in determining the distribution of responses to questions on this sub-scale; however, a few differences were observed. Younger respondents were slightly more likely to indicate disagreement that the title *Bishop* is offensive *(MeanUse_01)*, and older respondents were slightly more likely to indicate agreement to a preference for the title *Bishop* *(MeanUse_04)*, that the title is important for equal status with ministers from other denominations *(MeanUse_05)*, and that women should be excluded from obtaining the title due to the Biblical definition of this position *(MeanUse_06)*.

7.2.3 Education



There was consensus in the distribution of responses among respondents with less than a four-year degree and those with completed bachelor's degrees on virtually every question of this sub-scale, with the exception of the question related to women being excluded from obtaining the title *Bishop* due to the Biblical definition *(MeanUse_06)*. Respondents with a completed bachelor's degree were more likely to indicate some form of disagreement with this statement (47% compared to 39% among those who have not completed a four-year degree), and this difference was observed even more so among those with completed graduate degrees; 53% of these respondents indicated some form of disagreement.

Respondents with completed graduate degrees were also more likely to indicate agreement on several other questions in this sub-scale. While these respondents were slightly more likely to indicate use of the title in their everyday role *(MeanUse_03)*, they were also more likely to indicate agreement for the following: reserving the term for leadership roles *(MeanUse_02)*, a preference for the term Ordained *Minister* to Ordained *Bishop* *(MeanUse_04)*, the desire to see this debate resolved *(MeanUse_07)*, and not using the title when referring to the highest rank of ministry to friends from other denominations *(MeanUse_08)*.

7.2.4 Global Region

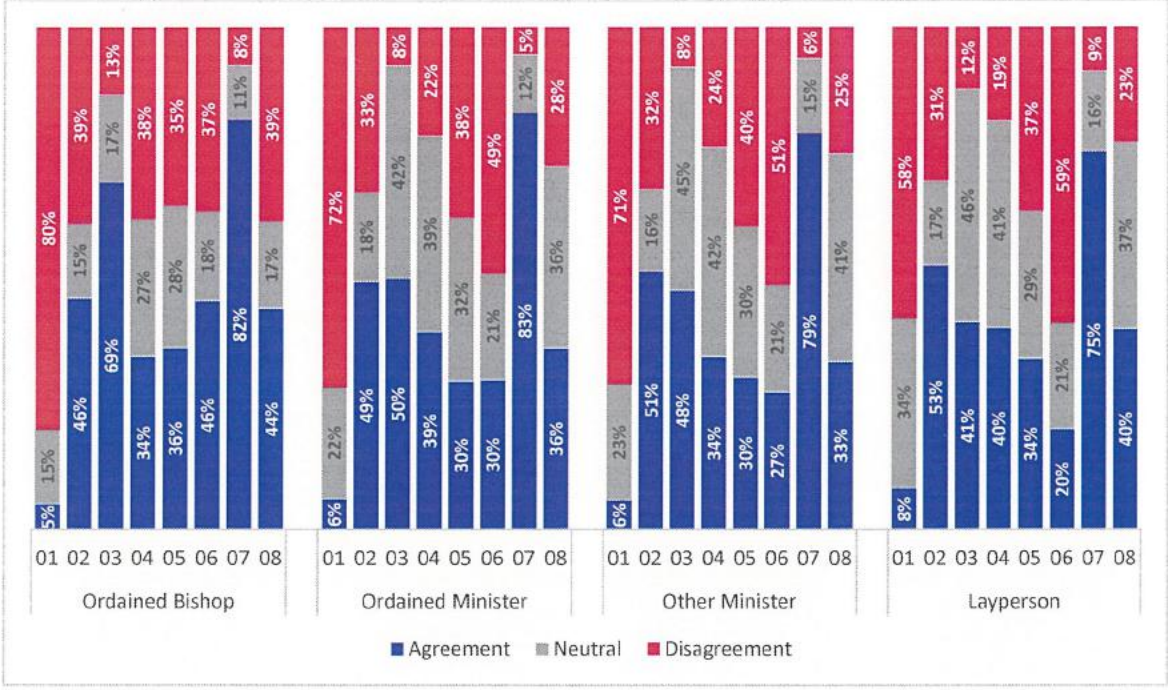
Graphically representing responses according to global region is difficult due to the number of regions and number of questions. In order to visualize the data, color scales are provided for each question according to global region, where darker blue indicates more *agreement* and darker red less. Responses from Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Oceania were removed due to small response sizes.

Global Region	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
1-USA-South	6%	49%	62%	39%	29%	43%	86%	42%
2-USA-Northeast	4%	53%	51%	35%	37%	38%	84%	34%
3-USA-Midwest	5%	51%	63%	37%	25%	38%	85%	42%
4-USA-West	5%	52%	64%	41%	33%	35%	81%	47%
5-Central America	8%	35%	46%	25%	40%	16%	65%	32%
6-South America	5%	46%	50%	22%	44%	20%	63%	29%
7-Canada	4%	57%	58%	49%	44%	25%	81%	36%
8-Mexico	7%	41%	54%	28%	42%	20%	61%	41%
9-Carribean	7%	48%	45%	29%	49%	28%	81%	27%
12-Europe	3%	70%	48%	40%	37%	24%	82%	29%

There appear to be regional differences related to the meaning and usage of the title *Bishop.* Respondents from Central America and South America, along with those from the Caribbean and Europe, indicated they use the title *Bishop* more in their everyday role *(MeanUse_03)* than respondents from other global regions, and are more likely to use the title Bishop when referring to the highest rank of ministry in the Church of God to friends from other denominations *(MeanUse_08)*. Similarly, respondents from Central America, South America, and Mexico were less likely to agree that the title *Bishop* should be reserved for those in leadership roles over other pastors *(MeanUse_02)*. On the other hand, respondents from the United States, with the exception of the Northeast, are more likely to prefer the title Ordained *Minister* to Ordained *Bishop (MeanUse_04)*. USA respondents, along with those from Europe, were also less likely to indicate agreement that the title *Bishop* is important so that they can have equal status with ministers from other denominations *(MeanUse_05)*. These responses might partially explain why respondents from Central America, South America and Mexico indicated less agreement with the statement that the debate of the title *Bishop* needs to be resolved so the Church of God can move on from this issue *(MeanUse_07)* than respondents from other global regions.

Respondents from the United States indicated more agreement that women should be excluded from obtaining the title Bishop due to the Biblical definition of this position *(MeanUse_06)* than respondents from other global regions, and this was most pronounced among respondents from the Southern part of the United States.

7.2.5 Role/Rank



While there is consensus across all respondents that the debate over the title *Bishop* needs to be resolved so that the Church of God can move on from this issue *(MeanUse_07)*, responses to questions on this sub-scale seemed to vary according to role/rank. For example, disagreement with the statement that the title *Bishop* is offensive to me *(MeanUse_01)* differed according to role/rank. Ordained Bishops indicated more disagreement (80%) with this statement, compared to that of Ordained Ministers (72%), Other Ministers (71%), and laypersons (58%), who were also more likely to indicate a neutral response.

When asked if respondents prefer the title Ordained *Minister* to Ordained *Bishop* *(MeanUse_04)*, Ordained Ministers were slightly more likely (39%) to indicate some form of agreement than Ordained Bishops (34%); on the other hand, Ordained Bishops were more likely to indicate some form of disagreement (38% compared to 22% among Ordained Ministers). Respondents who were not Ordained Bishops were more likely to respond to this question with a neutral response (approximately 40%). While nearly half of all respondents indicated some form of agreement that the title *Bishop* should be reserved only for those in a leadership role over other pastors, Ordained Bishops were more likely to indicate disagreement with this statement (39%) than non-Bishops (averaging 32% disagreement across the other 3 categories).

Ordained Bishops were more likely to agree (46%) that women should be excluded from obtaining the title *Bishop* due to the Biblical definition of this position *(MeanUse_06)* than Ordained Ministers (30%), Other Ministers (27%) and laypersons (20%); more than half of non-Bishop responders indicated disagreement with this statement, with 59% of laypersons indicating some form of disagreement.

Several of the questions were worded in a way that might assume respondents already hold the title *Ordained Bishop* *(MeanUse_03, MeanUse_08)*, so any differences by Role/Rank are likely an artifact of this fact. That being said, a large percentage of Ordained Bishops (69%) indicated agreement to the statement: I do not use the title *Bishop* in my everyday role as pastor *(MeanUse_03)*, while just 44% of Ordained Bishops indicated they use the title when referring to the highest rank of ministry in the Church of God to friends from other denominations *(MeanUse_08)*.

Proposed Resolution for the 2020 General Assembly

Integrity in Educational Credentials

(11-14-18)

WHEREAS there is a proliferation of diploma mills accredited by accreditation mills offering educational credentials marketed as comparable to those conferred by legitimately accredited institutions; and

WHEREAS the method of obtaining such credentials extends from purchasing a diploma outright to completing a substandard regimen of study which, in depth and scope, is far beneath the generally accepted standards of academic protocol; and

WHEREAS one who obtains such credentials is either the victim of misleading and inaccurate marketing or is seeking to avoid the rigors of legitimate academic preparation; and

WHEREAS some of our ministers are obtaining credentials of this type, especially at the doctoral level, and listing them publicly and professionally; and

WHEREAS recipients of such credentials may become guilty of perpetrating fraud and/or subjecting themselves and their employers to litigation; and

WHEREAS professional organizations are taking greater care to ensure that persons they employ have obtained valid credentials and expertise; and

WHEREAS from its inception the Church of God has maintained a high standard of ethics and integrity regarding its ministers; and

WHEREAS Scripture mandates that the minister of the Gospel must live above reproach;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that to maintain integrity in the use of educational credentials we encourage our ministers to meet their academic needs through endorsed Church of God institutions, regionally and nationally accredited institutions in the USA or their equivalent outside the USA; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that our ministers refrain from listing, promoting or attributing to themselves any degree or title conferred by any institution or organization having, at the time of conferral, an accreditation status less than that of corresponding Church of God institutions; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that no media, ministry, department or employee of the Church of God shall list, attribute, publish or promote for any person, any degree or title conferred by an institution or organization having, at the time of conferral, an accreditation status less than that of corresponding Church of God institutions.

Respectfully submitted by
Russell A. Morris, PhD
Lead Pastor, Harvest Hills Church of God
Burlington, NC 27215
rmorris2@triad.rr.com
(336) 260-4888 (Cell)

H. Lynn Stone, D.Min.
738 Harris Creek Road
Cleveland, Tennessee 37311

August 30, 2019

Dr. Timothy M. Hill, General Overseer
International Executive Council
Church of God International Offices
P. O. Box 2430
Cleveland, Tennessee 37320-2430

Dr. Hill and International Executive Council Members:

Attached are five motions I respectfully submit to the Church of God International Executive Council for consideration to be placed on the agenda of the 2020 International General Assembly. These items have their origins in the recommendations adopted as Item 11 by the 2018 International General Assembly and the Global Forums conducted in 2018-2020.

In summary, the motions are intended to provide a parliamentary guideline for adopting five major changes in Church of God polity:

1. To change the name of the third rank of credentialed ministry in the Church of God from *ordained bishop* to *ordained elder*.

2. To explain and use the Biblical term *bishop* (*episkopos*) in relation to the Biblical terms *elder, steward,* and *deacon.* This will be done by referencing the material already adopted in the *Minutes* on pages 99-102 and using this excellent exegesis as the basis for changing the name of the third rank of ministry from *ordained bishop* to *ordained elder.*

3. To remove all polity restrictions that presently forbid qualified and credentialed Church of God female ministers from moving to the highest rank of credentialed ministry.

4. To make appropriate by-law and polity changes that will allow qualified female ministers to fully participate in the Church of God International General Council.

5. To make appropriate polity changes that will allow qualified female ministers to serve as members on the International Executive Council.

Thank you for your consideration of these items.

May the Lord give you wisdom and guidance as you prepare for the 2020 Church of God International General Assembly.

Sincerely,

H. Lynn Stone, D.Min.

MOTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION
BY THE INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
FOR THE 2020 INTERNATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

H. Lynn Stone, D.Min.

1. **Name-Change for the Third Rank of Credentialed Ministry to *Ordained Elder***

   a. That we amend page 99, **S22. ORDAINED BISHOP**, by striking the word *bishop* and inserting the word *elder*. Furthermore, that this name-change for the third rank of credentialed ministry, from *ordained bishop* to *ordained elder*, be made throughout the entire *Book of Minutes*, and in all the forms, study materials, certificates, and so forth, pertaining to the Church of God ministerial credentialing process.

   b. That we amend page 102, **S22. ORDAINED BISHOP [ELDER], II. Qualifications of Bishops [Elders]**, Item 1, by striking the words *ordained as bishop*, and inserting the words *ordained as elder*. Furthermore, that this name-change for ordination to the third rank of ministry be made throughout the entire *Book of Minutes,* and in all the forms, study materials, certificates, and so forth, pertaining to the Church of God ministerial credentialing process.

2. **Explanation of Terms *Bishop, Elder, Steward, and Deacon***

   a. That we amend page 99, **S22. ORDAINED BISHOP, I. The Meaning and Usage of the Term *Bishop***, by striking the words *Term Bishop* and inserting the words *Terms Bishops, Elders, Stewards, and Deacons*. (NOTE: Item I on pages 99-102, which deals with all four Biblical terms, should be read in its entirety in order to explain the rationale for this amendment).

   b. That we amend page 102, **S22. ORDAINED BISHOP [ELDER], II. Qualifications of Bishops [Elders]**, Item 1, by adding *Titus 1:4-9* (where the terms *elders, bishop, and steward* are all used together) as a reference following I Timothy 3:1-7.

3. **Female Ministers as Ordained Elders**

   a. That we amend page 103, **S22. ORDAINED BISHOP [ELDER], II. Qualifications of Bishops [Elders]**, by deleting *Item 8, It is understood that female ministers are not eligible for ordination as bishops [elders].*

   b. That we amend page 105, **S23. ORDAINED MINISTER, II. Rights and Authorities,** by deleting the paragraph. *It is understood that female ministers are not eligible for ordination as bishop [elder].*

c. That we amend page 106, **S25. FEMALE MINISTER,** by deletion.

d. That we amend page 103, **S22. ORDAINED BISHOP [ELDER], II. Qualifications of Bishops [Elders],** Item 7, by striking the word *wife* and inserting the word *spouse.*

4. **Female Ordained Elders as Members of the International General Council**

a. That we amend page 61, **ARTICLE VI, Governing Bodies, 2. International General Council, Members,** by striking the word *bishops* and inserting the word *elders.*

b. That we amend page 61, **ARTICLE VI, Governing Bodies, 2. International General Council, Agenda,** Item 1, by striking the word *bishops* and inserting the word *elders.*

c. That we amend page 66, **S4. INTERNATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL, I. Selection,** by striking the word *bishops* and inserting the word *elders.*

d. That we amend page 67, **S4. INTERNATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL, III. International General Council Agenda,** paragraph one, by striking the word *bishops* and inserting the word *elders.*

e. That we amend page 67, **S4. INTERNATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL, III. International General Council Agenda,** paragraph two, by striking the word *bishops* and inserting the word *elders.*

5. **Female Ordained Elders as Members of the International Executive Council**

a. That we amend page 69, **S5. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, II. Procedure for Filling Vacancies,** by striking the word *men* on line five and inserting the word *nominees.*

b. That we amend page 70, **S5. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, III. Duties and Authorities,** Item 7, by striking the word *men* on line three and inserting the word *councilors.*

c. That we amend page 77, **S9. SECRETARY GENERAL (Executive Bishop), III. Procedure for Filling Vacancy**, by striking the word *men* on line four and inserting the word *nominees.*

That the International General Assembly *Minutes* Committee be authorized to make appropriate gender-neutral pronoun and/or word changes in order to accommodate these motions.

9. Tenure of State Youth and Discipleship Director: Part 2

We recommend:

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

So as to read:

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

It was moved and duly seconded:

That the recommendation be amended by striking "16 years in a non-mission state" and inserting "12 years in a full-time state.

It was moved and duly seconded:

That the amendment be amended by adding:

And that full-time status be determined by the International Youth director, International Executive Committee liaison, and respected state/regional overseer.

Vote on the amendment to the amendment was taken and LOST.

Vote on the amendment was taken and LOST.

Motion to refer was moved and duly seconded.

Vote on MOTION TO REFER was taken and CARRIED.

PROPOSAL TO SIMPLIFY THE MINISTERIAL RANKS

RATIONALE:

After reviewing the resolutions proposed at the last 77th International General Assembly, the Church of God must continue to renew itself in a way that optimizes the scope and effectiveness of the mission. Along these lines, it was noted the need to reconsider the components of the structure, especially the ministerial ranks. Thus, Recommendation XI, Page 193, which mandated the celebration of global forums, also recommended, *"to discuss, talk, answer questions and spiritually discern the importance of ministerial rank, its requirements, the place of the ministers, as well as the meaning and use of the title of bishop."*

For decades, the International General Assembly has been reviewing the use of the term "bishop". The aforementioned resolution was the way of the International General Council to go beyond more research, and instead, to listen to the experience of the ministers.

Most of these forums have been permeated by a feeling that those ministerial ranks were created to serve the needs of the Church. In Acts 6 the church recognized the need of the widows and appointed men who the daily distribution of food; as a matter of fact, they were commissioned with the laying on of hands. The spirit of those positions was not to value the title, but their purpose. The interchangeable use of the terms of "bishop", "elder" and "pastor" in 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1: 5; Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3, etc., further evidences that the emphasis was not on establishing titles, but on appointing suitable persons to the ministry to the Church. Thus, there is a biblical precedent of seeing these titles as more flexible, and therefore, modifiable within the structure of the ministerial ranks.

This argument also, finds support on history, which has shown that one of the aims of the Reformation was precisely, to simplify the hierarchy of the clergy.

Furthermore, when we compare the responsibilities and duties of the ordained bishop ordained with those of the ordained minister, the only difference **is that** ordained bishops are allow to ordain other ministers, and to serve in executive positions; this justifies that we reserved the title of ordained bishop to those in administrative positions, such as national, regional and state overseers, and the members of the International Executive Committee. By doing so we would bring more uniformity to the present nomenclature of the administrative positions, distinguishing them with the title of bishop.

Then, to **generate an empowerment that is inclusive,** so **that the majority of** the ministers of the Church of God **would have** a **voice and vote in all settings of ministerial businesses,** both in the General International Council, and the International General Assembly, as well as in all those meetings held in countries, states, regions and territories where they minister. We acknowledge that, for decades, many ministers have been excluded from the aforementioned participation, due to factors that lie beyond themselves.

In the aim of **dignifying each minister as a person, and to affirm their ministerial identity in the Church of God**, in particular, those who belong to minority groups, such as women, younger ministers, a new generation of urban planters, directors of creative ministries or agencies, teachers at our Bible schools and seminars, and many others. This change will send a clear message that the floor on which the Church of God makes its decision is not the exclusive domain of smaller groups of older adult males; rather, we valued each person and his/her contribution.

In order to **energize the participation of all ministers and to expand the impact** of the Church of God in this new and very challenging 21st century,

WE RECOMMEND,

That the first two ranks of Exhorter and Ordained Minister be the only credentials offered by the Church of God to the clergy as promotions, honor and ministerial advancement.

That Ordained Minister be the highest rank required for every minister and sufficient to participate with voice and vote in the General Assembly and in every business of the Church, as well as the requirement for any appointment within the Church of God.

That the title be conferred only to those in administrative positions. That the Church of God Minutes be amended to reflect these changes, specifically S22. **ORDAINED BISHOP,** Item III-9; Item I, Part B-4.

Explanatory note: This amendment could be done since The Minutes do not require a ministerial rank for those on the position of State or Regional Overseer. However, if this motion is approved, those sections would have to be edited to reflect the change from the title of Ordained Bishop to that of Ordained Minister.

MOTION TO AMEND THE APPEAL PROCESS OF OFFENDING MINISTERS

RATIONALE:

The Church of God, from its beginning, has kept a constant growth and progress extending its presence and impact to more than 187 countries, where it recognizes more than 42 thousand ministers in its three-level credential system.

The administrative structures that have been formed over the years in those countries and regions have proven to be solid and reliable, responsibly keeping the vision, mission, policies and procedures of our denomination.

The growth and advancement of the Church of God have resulted in more ministerial duties for the General Overseer.

The current rules of appeal often involve a significant investment of resources, such as the translation of documents, travel expenses of board members, adjustment of agendas and calendars, etc.

It would be logical and positive to facilitate the resolution of ministerial cases within the immediate context of the minister in question.

We Recommend:

1. That we amend page 123, S31. OFFENDING MINISTERS, II. Appeals, item A, by deleting the following words, "~~**presented to the general overseer**~~", and replacing it with, ***"presented to the nearest authority and administrator"***, so as to read:

    A. Any appeal from a decision of a state, regional or territorial trial board must be ***presented to nearest authority and administrator*** in writing and signed, within ten (10) days after the defendant has received written notification of the decision from the state overseer.

If this motion is approved, then,

That we amend page 123, S31. OFFENDING MINISTERS, II. Appeals, item A, by adding the following words, "***The offending minister will be able to appeal the second decision to the next administrative level***", so as to read:

A. Any appeal from a decision of a state, regional or territorial trial board must be ***presented to nearest authority and administrator*** in writing and signed, within ten (10) days after the defendant has received written notification of the decision from the state overseer. ***The offending minister will be able to appeal the second decision to the next administrative level.***

RESOLUTION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO CONVENED OUTSIDE OF THE US EVERY 10 YEARS

RATIONALE:

The Minutes page 46, COMMISSION ON ORGANIZATION REPORT, "INTERNATIONAL", we find various positive expressions of concern for the International General Assembly to become more intentional on diversifying the leadership and more open to the participation of the international members. It reads,

1. That the Church of God, in accordance with the Biblical pattern, is an international church. It is international in scope, operation, and ministry, working for a common ministry and purpose in various nations and cultures of the world.

It also states,

3. That the Church of God is international in the highest and finest sense, working for a brotherhood among all races, peoples, customs, and nations…

The times require a global emphasis and that we consider the possibility of convening the International General Assembly, at least every 10 years, outside the continental United States. It should be noticed the model of the early Church, which having understood that the Church is not a country, but the Kingdom of God, long before the Reformation convened at different places (the Council of Jerusalem, Ephesus, Constantinople, etc.).

WHEREAS, we honor the beginnings and roots of the Church of God in the United States, affirming the achievement of growing from that first group of believers to a movement with presence in over 185 countries.

WHEREAS, the growth and expansion of the Church place on ourselves the responsibility of taking into account all of our members. That to this end it is important to have due representation to the end of enriching the business process.

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED, that we convene the International General Assembly in a country outside of the continental United States, at least every 10 years.

Minutes, Page 60, Article VI – Governing Bodies

1. INTERNATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MEETING

To read: The International General Assembly shall meet biennially to consider all recommendations from the International General Council. *Further, that we convene the International General Assembly in a country outside of the continental United States, at least every 10 years.*

Abundant Life
Church of God

January 6, 2020
Bishop Hill,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!
I first of all wanted to say that I have admired your leadership of our great church for years! Your passion to see God move, and use each of us on the local and state levels to reach out is inspiring. Thank you again for coming to Hurst a few months back for the forum, and allowing folks to share their heart with you and those present. I was sad to not see as many Pastors there, and showing concern, but perhaps it was a very busy time for them.
Bishop, we have tossed around the matter of Woman in Ministry, Woman as Bishops, and High or Higher ranking positions for them for years now. I had addressed what I am putting in writing again today with many that do agree that something, somehow, and in someway needs to be done to bring this to a final conclusion. We can't keep putting off, and or "Kicking the Can down the road" until it comes up again. The fact is, we have other matters that are truly facing us that are extremely important like, Social drinking, (In Which I do not approve), raffles, (Which are against the minutes yet many of our Pastors and State Leaders have given OK too), Vaping which is not addressed in the smoking categories as some "Vaping" is not tobacco. The other things that come to mind is legalized marijuana, and how states are to deal with that, and how local level churches are to contend with that as it pertains to prescription for its members, and could eventually effect leadership if prescribed. So to end the ramble, I would like to purpose the following measure for observation, and consideration.

Re: **Woman in Ministry**
Where as woman in ministry is founded in The Word of God, mostly in supportive roles, but have been known to be leaders and strength for leadership, and where as the Church of God has never in my time restricted woman from moving forward, ministering and sharing the Gospel, and or prevented them from receiving credentials, and where as the woman of God are afforded the opportunity to achieve the rank of "Ordained Minister" which is our second rank in the credentialing process, and where as there are "Men" who hold the rank of "Ordained Minister" and because of past experiences are not afforded the opportunity to move forward to the high rank of "Ordained Bishop" ; Be it therefore resolved, if we can entrust both men and woman, holding the rank of "Ordained Minister" to the most precious commodity of the COG known as the "Local Church" ; Let us therefore, invite them into the conversation, sit, fellowship, and VOTE on the General Assembly Council floor as equals, and allow each "Ordained Minister" that has held said rank, at least 18 months prior to the next scheduled General Assembly the opportunity to be a voting General Council member throughout the whole process, and not just in the generalized General Assembly vote which only requires one to be at least 16 years old, and a member of a local Church of God congregation.

My final thoughts are this.... Lets stop trying to prevent people from taking positions within the higher ranks, stop changing titles, and together let's all pick up a towel, and serve together! Unity is what makes us stronger, and if truth were told, many of us would not have a church to Pastor today, had it not been for strong Spiritual Woman, truly being the backbone of the church.

Thanks so much for reading, and God Bless!

If there is something to be fixed, reworded, or better written, please feel free to change, keep, and use whatever I have shared here.

God Bless, and May The Lord God of Heaven Bless His Church!

Firmly in His Grip,

Bishop David N. Scoggins
Lead District Pastor
CTX District and Killeen-Abundant Life COG

FIRST ASSISTANT
GENERAL OVERSEER
NOV 0 1 2019

28 October 2019

Dear Raymond,

Hope all is well with you and yours. I know it's hard for you to believe, but I don't say much unless I feel strongly about something. Back on August 15, 2019, the Faith News Network released a wonderful article entitled: Evangelists Speak Out. Three Church of God Evangelists opened their heart and spoke mainly about how the Church is gasping for Revival. These ministers relayed some information that a lot of Church of God members have known for a long time. Below are some "snippets" of their concerns:

- It is disturbing that many churches have silenced the voice of the evangelist by lumping them all into one basket of distrust.

- The church has been inclined toward performance-driven attraction rather than simply relying on the simplicity of the Gospel.

- The church is in a leadership crisis, and the need to raise up leaders with missional intent must inform the efforts for evangelism.

- The message God has placed on my heart for this season is one word – Flashpoint. It's about igniting passion (a burning desire) or kindling a fire. The fire of passion can change a life, and one passionate life can change the world.

- The Holy Spirit has called this ministry to be a flashpoint for revival, and trading our mundane existence for the abundant life Christ offers.

- My calling goes beyond what happens in the pulpit.

- I made a commitment not only to preach Jesus to broken people but to remind mended people of a broken world in need of a Savior.

- Sadly, some Christians simply do not feel compelled to take the risk required by evangelism of seeing the church's witness in the world – both in terms of responsibility and ability.

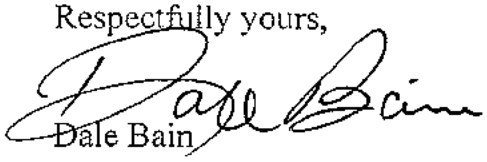
- God has given me a message of restoring the importance of the Holy Ghost in our lives and churches.

- It is not theatrics, fancy programs, or great lights that draw a lost man or woman to the altar; only the Spirit of God can draw a person to salvation.

I really felt excited when I read how these young men speak. I believe the focal point of these testimonies was the remark about "the church being in a leadership crisis." I feel that all of the states in the US need a full-time Evangelism Director to serve with the Administrative Bishop and State Youth Director. I would strongly recommend that this position be directed by the Executive Committee and passed at the General Assembly. I am not a minister, but I think that we made a gross error when the states began to change or do away with this position. Not only could that person help spread the gospel in the state, but could also direct an evangelist training program within the state. Like one of these committed evangelists stated: The task of evangelism belongs to the whole church – and that is good news. It is time to be proud to be Pentecostal once again."

Thanks for listening and please come see us.

Respectfully yours,



Dale Bain

PS. Brian Gilpin is one of the best things to happen to Church at the Brook. He is surely an Evangelist.

MOTION RELATED TO WOMEN AND THE TITLE OF ORDAINED BISHOP
Christ has redeemed us and made us equal and free

RATIONALE

During the 65th International General Assembly of the Church of God, a resolution was approved related to our "Commitments with our Mission and Vision", [under the heading on "Ministry", paragraph 4] included the following sentence,

> Recognition of the vital role women presently give in Church of God ministry—their teaching, preaching, administrative and leadership skills—and renewed encouragement and support for their ministry, in keeping with that obvious emphasis found in the Gospels, throughout the Book of Acts, and in the Epistles (Acts 16:14, 15, 40; 18:26; 21:8, 9; Romans 16:1-7; Titus 2:3-5).

When we take into account such statements, we have to recognize that great progress has been achieved in opening more spaces in the different ministerial areas for women. However, the limitation of non-access to the Ordained Bishop's credential, which will in turn would allow women to serve in administrative positions, and to have a voice and vote in the International General Council still persists.

This limitation imposed on women of not having access to the ministerial rank of the ordained bishop traces its roots back to the position of A. J. Tomlinson, whom by 1910 applied his own interpretation of the text of 1 Timothy 2:10 -12 – regarding women keeping silence in the churches – to women keeping silence in the business sessions of local churches and general assemblies. In other words, the restrictions on women are largely based on tradition, rather than on an in-depth serious study of what the Bible meant in those instances. This is clearly supported by the fact that throughout the years, the Church of God has amended its Discipline and Government to include women in the business sessions of local churches, on their boards or pastor's councils, as pastors of churches and by allowing them access to the rank of Ordained Minister. Moreover, a study presented to the 2008 International Executive Council shed light on the fact that there were no restrictions of gender for the attaining the position of District Overseer **(Page 137, S43 Item II).** In addition, The Minutes state in several places that Ordained Ministers will be considered to occupy positions in cases where Ordained Bishops might not be available (S33 Section I for example). Therefore, if there were truly a biblical reason to limit the advancement of women to the highest ministerial rank of Ordained Bishop, it would be a contradiction to keep open the aforementioned.

Furthermore, not only the limitations lack a biblical foundation, but they also clearly disregard the fact that a group of 8 believers (3 men and 5 women), by faith, on August 19, 1886, founded the Christian Union, to which the Church of God owes its existence.

The voices of highly respected and serious biblical scholars have shared their findings on the appropriate exegesis and biblical contexts of the often-quoted texts concerning women. Committees have been commissioned with the exhaustive work of studying concepts such as the bishopric, and so far none of them has identify a biblical basis for the limitation on the ministry of women.

This issue has been approached for various fields that make the limitation on women unsustainable. From a sociological, anthropological, theological and cultural analysis, it is possible to demonstrate that societies are being built and dignified through the evolution and dynamics of history. For this reason, it is appropriate to propose that women have the same ecclesiastical rights as men, especially the right to the ordination as bishops.

The Minutes on S22. ORDAINED BISHOPS, section II. Qualifications of Ordained Bishops, paragraph 2, establishes: the age (older than 25 years of age), the ministerial experience, academic preparation, been baptized in the Holy Spirit, approval of the ministerial exam, and a good marital testimony. However, without any explanation it moves to paragraph 8, "It is understood that female ministers are not eligible for ordination as bishop." It is difficult to justify this assertion, when clearly hundreds of women all over the world meet the established requirements for the position. The only thing that seems to disqualify her is being a woman, which implies a discriminatory and unsustainable action.

With all of this in mind, and considering that the Church of God as an institution fosters values, and exercises its prophetic voice by discerning the signs of the times by the power of the Spirit, and from the Scriptures, builds up the human dignity of man and woman,

WE RECOMMEND,

A. That we amend **S22. ORDAINED BISHOPS, section II. Qualifications of Ordained Bishops**, by deleting paragraph 8, ~~"It is understood that female ministers are not eligible for ordination as bishop"~~.

   (Should this measure pass, ITEM B would be removed from the minutes.)

B. That we amend **S25. FEMALE MINISTER, to include the third rank of ministry.**

Motion for Great Commission Vision Fund

RECOMMENDATION:

Pages 153-154, S54. FINANCIAL SYSTEM, II. Tithing

We recommend:

That we amend page 154, S54. FINANCIAL SYSTEM, II. Tithing, by inserting a new Paragraph 2 and numbering all paragraphs afterward appropriately.

So as to read:

2. To expand the Kingdom of God, each local church treasurer shall send one percent (1%) of all tithes paid into the local church to the International Offices with their monthly report, designated for the "Great Commission Vision Fund." Fifty percent (50%) of the Great Commission Vision Fund shall be designated for church planting, twenty-five percent (25%) shall be designated for church health and revitalization, and twenty-five percent (25%) shall be designated for a "Church Planting Scholarship Fund." This provision will expire as of the close of the 2028 General Assembly, unless additional action is taken.

Motion to Establish a Church Planting Scholarship Fund

Should the above measure pass,

RECOMMENDATION:

Pages 153-154, S54. FINANCIAL SYSTEM, II. Tithing

We recommend:

That we amend page 154, S54. FINANCIAL SYSTEM, II. Tithing, by inserting a new Paragraph 3 and numbering all paragraphs afterward appropriately.

So as to read:

3. A Church Planting Scholarship Fund shall be created, under the guidance of the Office of the Secretary General, to assist recent graduates from any Church of God institution

of higher learning in the repayment of student loans if such graduate commits to serve and serves in pastoral ministry in an underserved area. An application for loan forgiveness will be reviewed annually and a qualified candidate, based upon guidelines established and approved by the International Executive Committee, shall be eligible to apply for student loan payback assistance for no more than five years after beginning pastoral ministry in an underserved area.

[NOTE: The Scholarship Fund provision could also be placed under **Pages 148-150, S51. Pastor** as **Paragraph VI. Church Planting Scholarship Fund**

Spiritual Acceleration and Core Values

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the previously listed tasks and observations of the Task Force on Spiritual Acceleration and Core Values and our desire to provide a strategy on how to reemphasize, reclaim, and reaffirm our doctrinal identity, we offer the following recommendations:

1. That a process be implemented whereby credentialed ministers (all levels) must reaffirm their belief in and commitment to the doctrine and polity of the Church of God. (A form of recertification)

2. That an educational component be a vital part of the reaffirmation/recertification process.
   a. Must be accessible, affordable, and certifiable.
   b. Must have guaranteed substance.
   c. Subject content to be aspects of theology, scripture, and social views.
   d. Consider the possibility of surveying global Church of God leaders to ascertain the greatest needs.
   e. May take the form of CEU (Continuing Education Units).

3. That opportunity be provided for members of the Doctrine and Polity Committee or their designees to present the Church of God position on our key doctrinal beliefs, core values, and social issues in state and regional meetings.
   a. These sessions should be designed with teaching followed by Q/A.
   b. The pattern needs to provide a **safe zone** for ministers to express their doubts and fears without repercussion. This would seem to necessitate that no one with appointive or reporting responsibilities would be present in the Q/A.

4. That current resources be highlighted in the reaffirmation process.
   a. Position papers developed and being developed by the Doctrine and Polity Committee which are on the website and the number will continue to be expanded.
   b. Resource bank of books and periodical articles written by Church of God authors.

5. That a concentrated effort be made to teach our latter millennials and Generation Z the basics of the faith, so they are prepared to maintain and defend their life in Christ as they go into the workplace and educational institutions.

6. That the core values be reduced to 3-5 for simplification and branding.
   a. No major emphasis will be eliminated but rather consolidated for easier articulation and communication. For example, core values #1 and #9 fit under the heading of Spiritual formation.
   b. This simplification may provide a catalyst for greater unity in ministry efforts.

Study Series for Kids and Students

RECOMMENDATIONS

We make a motion to ask the Church of God International Department of Youth and Discipleship to initiate the creation of a standing committee consisting of representation from Youth and Discipleship, Pentecostal Theological Seminary, Lee University School of Religion, and Pathway Press for the purpose of doing the following:

1. Coordinate the development of ongoing study series curricula that can be used in Kids Church and in Student Worship in local churches. These series should be relevant and topical in nature dealing with current issues that children and youth are facing. (See attached sample.)

2. Ask Pathway to work with the committee in researching and creation of a catalogue of available Pentecostal resources that are approved and recommended by the committee.

3. Develop a strategy to make local church leaders aware of resources that are available.

Funding for these projects will need to be provided and determined by the International Executive Council.

Actualization of a Global Context of Ministry

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That page 68, S5. International Executive Council, I. Selection, 2 be replaced with the following:

   2. The International Executive Council is comprised of the International Executive Committee and twenty (20) elected members. Not less than twelve (12) members shall be pastors at the time of their election by the International General Council. Further, five (5) indigenous members, one from each of the five (5) Field Regions of Caribbean, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America, and Africa shall, at the time of their election by the ordained bishops in their respective region, be a legal resident of and conduct their primary ministry in the region from which they are elected. No member of the International Executive Committee who has just completed his tenure of office shall be eligible to serve on the International Executive Council for the ensuing International General Assembly term.

2. That page 69, S5. International Executive Council, I. Selection, 4 be replaced with the following:

   Fifteen (15) members shall be elected by the International General Council biennially, with a member being eligible to succeed himself for one term. One *indigenous* member from each of the five (5) Field Regions (Africa, Asia-Pacific, Caribbean, Europe, Latin America) shall be elected by the ordained bishops of the respective regions biennially, with a member being eligible to succeed himself for one term.

Delinquent Reporting

Delinquent Reporting Study and Recommendation Committee

The study reveals as of February-July 2019 the following:

- 6,211 ministers missing reports in the last six months
- 1,300 local churches missing reports
- 397 churches showing a shortage of monies in at least one report

The report indicates the committee's opinion is that the issue will never be totally resolved. However, the report suggests the issue can be better managed with the institution of credential renewal.

Recommendation:
That Church of God ministers renew credentials biennially on September 1 prior to the General Assembly and prior to voting on their administrative bishop. If a minister is not current with their personal and local church reports, they cannot renew their credentials until reports are current or arrangements have been established with their administrative bishop.

Further, credential renewal will require a renewal fee or minister's dues similar to the Assemblies of God scale as follows:

Ordained: $25 per month or $300 per year
Licensed: $20 per month or $240 per year
Certified: $10 per month or $120 per year

Renewal fees can be paid via debit or credit card, PayPal account or E-Check options. It is suggested that ministers pay the renewal fee monthly avoiding a lump sum at the end of the year.

The report provides the following potential benefits of credential renewal:

1. It has a proven track record in one of our sister organizations.
2. It is a natural solution for updating our ministerial database on the state and national level.
3. It is a periodic checkpoint for catching up all personal and church reports.
4. It relieves a lot of the pressure from the shoulders of the Administrative Bishop to be a "policeman" and "enforcer" and it places the responsibility squarely upon the shoulders of the credentialed minister.
5. It fosters doctrinal and financial accountability for our ministers.
6. It is a strong reminder to our ministers of the covenant that they made when they first signed up for this thing.
7. It has the potential to naturally weed out the non-committed (those who hold credentials but never minister anywhere).
8. It will bring much needed income into the organization.

Issues for Motion Consideration

- This recommendation would require action by the General Council and General Assembly including governance of credential renewal, Minutes modification with inclusion of additional qualification for ministry, and results for non-payment of minister's dues.
- S28. MINISTERIAL REPORTING, III. Delinquent Reporting would require complete revision with guidelines, requirements, outcomes, governance policies and potential disciplinary action.
- Consideration would need to be addressed for international credentialed ministers from third world countries with lower socio-economic profiles. In addition, how would credentialing renewal and fees be processed internationally and how would this relate to World Missions?
- Other areas of governance that would need to be addressed include S54. FINANCIAL SYSTEM, III. Church Reports, A. Consistency in Reporting, Page 155 regarding procedures for delinquency in local church reporting.
- Potential other questions to consider include compensation for pastors, underpaid pastors, pastoral sabbatical impact, supplemental income for underpaid pastors/evangelists and retired ministers.

RECOMMENDATION: TASK FORCE ON BYLAWS ISSUES

Should the Executive Council consider this issue, an in-depth study should be authorized addressing governance impact and polity implementation.

We recommend:

That the "Delinquent Reporting" recommendation be tabled.

Structural Acclimation Task Force

Members
Gary Lewis, Chair
Keith Ivester
Mitch Corder
Randall Parris
Mark Leonhardt
Randy Smith
Dee Raff
Raymond Burch
Yvette Santana
Mike Reynolds

Overview of Task Force – To refocus, retool and recalibrate our internal structure and delivery system to accelerate our harvest goals.

Item One: Consider our voting and appointment processes. Ensuring that they reflect our multicultural diversity, giving us the ability to enhance our missional impact.

<u>Structural Acclimation Task Force</u>

Overview of Task Force: To refocus, retool and recalibrate our internal structure and delivery system to accelerate our harvest goals.

Assignment: Consider our voting and appointment processes., ensuring the process reflects our multicultural diversity to enhance our missional impact.

The New Option to Consider:
– Council of 22

- 18 Ordained Bishops are Elected to the Council of 22 by the Ordained Bishops at the General Assembly.

Current Structure

- Minimum of nine pastors
- Three International Ordained Bishops
- At large

Possible Structure

- Minimum of nine pastors
- Two International Ordained Bishops
- At large
- 4 Additional Members elected by the Executive Council

This option would expand the current "Council of 18" to a "Council of 22" by the Executive Committee recommending and nominating 7 Ordained Bishops (who are currently pastoring) for consideration and election by the Executive Council. Through the Election

process, 4 additional members would join the 18-member Executive Council to complete the eligible positions of the Council of 22. (Just like the 18, these 4 additional members are recommended/nominated and elected every two years and may serve up to a total of four years on the "Executive Council" or "Council of 22".)

***Explanation:** The Church of God has always celebrated and embraced people and ministers of different cultures, social-economic stages, geographic locals, ages, and languages. Our movement is fully committed to seeing more ministers from one, or a blend, of these classifications serve the church at all levels of leadership, including higher leadership. *Because the Church of God is governed by love and the New Testament, this measure confirms that the intent, heart, desire and resolve of this Body to always have an even more inclusive and more diverse representation of gifted, talented, Spirit-led leaders on our Executive Council is realized.* Allowing the duly elected 18 Council Members to prayerfully elect these 3 members guarantees that additional qualified, capable Ordained Bishops will bring much wanted and sincerely needed ethnic, generational, geographical, and cultural diversification and representation. *This measure safeguards that the Executive Council of 21 will look and function more like a "photographic snapshot" of heaven, enhancing our missional impact!*

Item Two: Consideration for greater global missional impact in the Church of God.

Consider that the International Council be considered the Global Ministries THINK TANK of the Church of God. This group would ideally operate as an advisory panel, providing ministry reports and opportunities relative to the international ministries of the Church of God.

We further suggest that the International Executive Committee, in consultation with the leadership of World Missions, fulfill the openings of items 6 & 7, by appointing contemporary, culturally diverse leaders to serve on the International Council in addition to those members specified by the Church of God General Assembly Minutes. This group would be charged with providing relevant recommendations to be presented to the International General Council that would have a positive impact on the global ministries of the Church of God.

LOCAL CHURCH ELDERS PROPOSAL

The Executive Council and Committee
The Church of God
Church of God International Offices
Cleveland, TN

DEAR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL,

The following proposal is written for your consideration and review for discussion at the General Assembly of 2020. I certainly esteem the challenges of prayerful review of many aspects concerning the church polity, rule, and governance. I appreciate the discernment that accompanies your task in discerning the times.

I am submitting this proposal for the following reasons:

1. To ensure that our polity continues to align with our commitment to the entire Word of God and the New Testament for our rule and governance.
2. To provide clarity for pastors who have or inherit a church and pastor's council.
3. To help pastors understand and exercise appropriate authority within the local church.
4. To give pastors guidance on how to navigate unbecoming conduct by one of more of the members of a church and pastor's council.

In many ways, our current church and pastor's councils are acting as elders, assisting in the choosing of pastors in conjunction with the State Overseer. The challenge here is that if this board is assisting in choosing pastors, then they also may perceive the authority to call pastors to resign. Moreover, though the church and pastor's council is conceptually frames as ministry of deacons, they are also given responsibilities that are for the elders to consider such as financial stewardship.

Therefore, I am proposing that the church adopt a New Testament polity of elders who are appointed rather than elected. I also provide language to help a pastor navigate conflict within the board of elders itself if it should arise. As pastor, I did not know how to proceed when unbecoming conduct emerged within the church and pastor's council. This proposal provides clarity to pastors within the paradigm of New Testament church discipline.

I want to thank-you for your time and consideration when reviewing this proposal and I welcome feedback.

Sincerely,
T. Patrick Jensen

Local Church Elders: A proposal for the consideration by the Executive Council and Committee for the General Assembly and modification of our minutes.

The following is a proposal to replace the current nomenclature in the minutes referring to the Church and Pastor's Council.

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Acts 20:28

A local church shall have a body of elders with the presiding elder being the local church pastor. The elders will be appointed by the local church pastor and the number that comprises this body will be determined also by the local church pastor (1 Timothy 3). The elders are not compensated by the church so as to remain free from financial conflict of interests. The duties of this body of elders is one of governance and spiritual direction and is specified in the following manner:

- To cooperate with the pastor as he or she shepherds the flock (1 Peter 5:2).
- To be watchful of the adversary's movements and emissaries (Acts 20).
- To teach and preach the Word of God (1 Peter 5, 2 Timothy 4:2).
- To assist the pastor in leading the flock into the purposes God intends (1 Peter 5:2).
- To preside over a local expression of the church in cooperation with the local church pastor. This also includes spiritual oversight of lay leaders, paid, and volunteer staff members in the church (Acts 20).
- To guard the flock from the devices of the enemy (1 Peter 5:8, Acts 20).
- To discern with the pastor for sin and wickedness within the body and to call for repentance when necessary (1 Peter 5:2).
- To assist the pastor in the folding of the flock of God *vis a vis* healthy boundaries, clear roles, and conspicuous lines of authority (1 Peter 5:2).
- To assist in mediating conflict that may arise in the church between members (Acts 15). The pastor will begin mediation but may need to call upon two to three elders for further mediation. If conflict is not resolved in this manner, the individual is brought before the entire body of elders. If the individual is determined to require disfellowship as a form of discipline, this is to be made public to the church in a called business meeting presided by the local pastor having obtained consent from the state overseer (Matthew 18:15-20).

- The body of elders confirms the financial direction of the church in cooperation with the pastor and determines the pastor's total compensation which is to be no less than what is iterated by the minutes of the Church of God.

- The elders do not, however, evaluate the pastor's ministry. Evaluation and encouragement of the pastor can be done by the state overseer in an annual meeting where ministry goals and accomplishments are discussed, and a written evaluation provided to the pastor.

- The elders do not act independent of the local pastor and do not meet without the pastor. The church pastor is the presiding elder and chair of the elder board. The sole exception to this is when the pastor recuses him or herself in order for the elders to determine his or her compensation.

The role of the elder is critical to the operations, vision, financial integrity, and future vision of the church. Thus, each one must meet Biblical qualifications prior to being considered for appointment by the local church pastor. The elder must have the following qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9):

- Blameless and above reproach.

- Faithful husband or wife. Although a divorced individual is not altogether precluded from service, the local pastor must inquire regarding the circumstance of this divorce and it must meet the acceptable reasons already specified in the minutes of the Church of God (Matthew 5:31-32).

- Vigilant, discerning of the times.

- Sober, not given to drinking or to the lusts of this age. Again, the local pastor should inquire as to whether the candidate for elder meets the behavioral expressions already specified in the minutes of the church of God in accordance with the practical commitments.

- Good behavior, wholesome conduct, quick to listen, and slow to speak (James 1:19).

- One who refrains from disputations and does not easily quarrel. One who does not stir up dissension in the church.

- Given to hospitality. The elder does not necessarily require the spiritual gift of hospitality but must have the temperament and heart of hospitality.

- An aptitude to teach. This is an essential and necessary qualification. The elder must have the spiritual gift of teaching, as this is the primary role of an elder.

- Does not seek fame or fortune. Does not covet qualities, gifts, or talents of another.

- Has a home that is characterized by respect, peace, and harmony. That is, the elder is ruling his or her own house well. The local pastor is to interview both the candidate and his or her spouse when determining this qualification.

- Seasoned and mature in the faith as evidenced by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, consistent in tithing, and has underwent church membership. The local pastor has latitude in determining this qualification further based on the fruit and duration of time one has served the Lord.

- A good reputation in the community. The local pastor can interview the candidates suggested references or the ministry leaders where the candidate has served to discern this attribute.

A local church pastor is to create an application for elders based on the principles above that candidates are to complete and submit to the pastor. The pastor can appoint unilaterally or consult with an existing board of elders to determine the candidacy of the applying elder.

In the event that one or more elders is in conflict with the local pastor, then the state overseer will mediate this conflict. The state overseer provides the final jurisdiction in determining a verdict in the matter and will determine the course of action.

There is no appeal after the final determination is made. If an elder seeks to be restored to the fellowship, he or she must submit a request in writing and present him or herself with the fruit of repentance before the state overseer. A restoration plan will be determined by the state overseer. Any unbecoming conduct by an elder will be treated as is already specified in the minutes of the Church of God concerning unbecoming conduct of a church member.

INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL EXPANSION – Six Foreign Nationals (Majority Vote Required) (2-14-20)

Page 68, S5. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, I. Selection,

> 2. The International Executive Council is comprised of the International Executive Committee and eighteen (18) elected members. Not less than twelve (12) members shall be pastors at the time of their election. Further, three (3) members of the Council of Eighteen shall be at the time of their election foreign nationals residing and ministering outside the United States. No member of the International Executive Committee who has just completed his tenure of office shall be eligible to serve on the International Executive Council for the ensuing International General Assembly term.

RECOMMENDATION:

We recommend:

> **That we amend page 68, S5. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, I. Selection, 2.,** by deleting three (3) members and inserting six (6) members.

So as to read:

> 2. The International Executive Council is comprised of the International Executive Committee and eighteen (18) elected members. Not less than twelve (12) members shall be pastors at the time of their election. Further, six (6) members of the Council of [Twenty-four] shall be at the time of their election foreign nationals residing and ministering outside the United States. No member of the International Executive Committee who has just completed his tenure of office shall be eligible to serve on the International Executive Council for the ensuing International General Assembly term.

(NOTE: Should the previous motion prevail, this motion shall be considered. If the previous motion fails, this motion falls to the floor and will not be considered.)

General Assimilation:
Assistant International Youth & Discipleship Director Age Limit

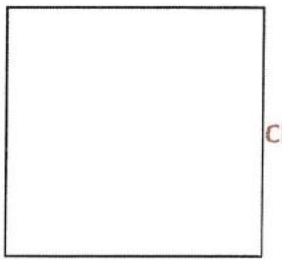
That we amend page 78, **S10, Ministry of Youth and Discipleship, II, Assistant Director of Youth and Discipleship, A** by amending paragraph 1 by adding the following:

He at the time of his election shall not be at the age of forty (40) or older (effective 2020).

So as to read:

> 1. The assistant director of Youth and Discipleship shall be nominated by the International General Council and elected quadrennially (4-year term) by the International General Assembly. He at the time of his election shall not be at the age of forty (40) or older (effective 2020). He shall not be able to succeed himself beyond one four-year term (effective 2016)

Jacob A. SanCoucie
(file #70314)



Church Of God International Offices

Name	Tim Cranfill
E-mail	tcranfill@ptseminary.edu
Phone Number	(210) 289-3224
Your Church	New Vision
Address	Street Address: 10050 W Commerce St City: San Antonio State / Province: TX Postal / Zip Code: 78227 Country: United States
Ministerial ID Number	34554
Church File Number	n/a
Questions / Comments	Question - I would like to make a recommendation to be placed before the general assembly this year to create a work group or committee to craft a code of ethics for Church of God Clergy. What might be the best process to do make that suggestion? Thanks!

memo

Church of God International Offices

To: Dr. Tim Hill, General Overseer

From: Dr. Carlton Cannon Jr. – Ministerial #55957

CC: Executive Committee, Church of God

Date: March 6, 2020

Re: Proposed Motion for 2020 General Assembly – **Equitable Accord for Women in Ministry**

Proposed Motion:

It has been a pleasure to read through all of the commentary and contrasting opinions regarding women in ministry, but it appears that we are somewhat now at a standstill. One could characterize this impasse as a type of spiritual paradigm paralysis demonstrated by our reluctance and inability to look beyond our current framework and perception.

The purpose for this memo is to respectfully propose a motion for our 2020 General Assembly referred to as an "Equitable Accord for Women in Ministry." This is not a problem of equality but of equity (meaning fairness, justness, righteousness). Is our current system equitable? The answer is **NO.**

Women currently serve as pastors of churches yet are unable to represent their local congregation as part of the International General Council. Some women even have male members of their own church that outrank them yet are allowed to sit on the floor with the International General Council and participate in the discussion while the women pastors are prohibited to do so. Many of our current ordained bishops do not even serve as pastors.

The quick argument often heard in response is to say that women may rather participate in the International General Assembly but that is not the same as contributing to the discussion with the International General Council.

Rationale:

According to the Minutes of the Church of God (2018):

S4. International General Council (p.66)-

I. **Selection (p.66):** The International General Council is composed of all ordained bishops and shall comprise its voting ranks. Ordained ministers, exhorters and laity shall be privileged to sit in the International General Council, without voting privileges.

II. **Duties (p.66):** The International General Council: 1- meet biennially to consider and prepare such recommendations as are Scriptural and proper in all matters pertaining to the welfare of the church. Such recommendations are to be presented to the International General Assembly for final disposition.
The problem – Qualified women, many of them pastors, are unable to consider recommendations from the International Executive Council. These women of God do not receive the International General Council agenda (as do the ordained bishops) 30 days prior to the General Assembly.

III. **International General Council Agenda (p.67):** Inasmuch as the official agenda, which is to claim the attention of the International General Council, is made available by the most efficient and effective methods to the ordained bishops at least thirty (30) days prior to the opening of the International General Council, all recommendations must be

received by the International Executive council in time for consideration at its April session in order to appear on the International General Council agenda.
The problem – Qualified women, many of them pastors, do not consider, do not participate in the debate nor do they prepare the recommendations that are to be presented to the International General Assembly for final position.

An Equitable Accord:

There is a need to create a third rank of ministry for the women without making drastic changes to the nomenclature of the Church of God. Currently, there are only two ranks for women which are exhorter and ordained minister; while the men have the following three ranks: exhorter, ordained minister and ordained bishop. I would respectfully propose creating a third rank for women which would be called **ordained minister superlative**. Our rankings would then be defined as the following: Men (exhorter, ordained minister, ordained bishop) and Women (exhorter, ordained minister, **ordained minister superlative**).

This would allow for qualified women (restricted to senior pastors and evangelists) who would have reached their third rank of ministry (**ordained minister superlative**) to participate in the discussion on the floor as a part of the International General Council.

Since the nomenclature of our Minutes requires those in certain leadership positions to be ordained bishops, women would still be excluded from leadership positions such as the Executive Committee/Council and Administrative Bishops.

Thank you for your consideration of my proposal. Peace and blessings to you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Carlton L. Cannon Jr. – Ministerial #55957
Pastor, Clarence Street Church of God, Seaford, DE

Kenneth Gentles

25 Western winds Cir.

Baltimore, MD. 21244.

The General Overseer & International

Executive Committee.

Church OF God International

Headquarters, Cleveland, Tenn.

U.S.A.

Re: Items for greater inclusion in administration

This missive intends to highlight some administrative flaws as they relate to minority inequalities within the organization. Immediate attention must be given to the items where possible in order to satisfy the groups affected:

1. A revamping of the International voting system for the selection of international representatives is absolutely necessary, as the present system undermines democracy and disenfranchised many participants. The system as is does not represent equality in the distribution of assignments.

   Another issue noticeable with the system is its potential to create confusion and gridlock due to the many flaws in the voting process. It is a system that favors the ministers in certain geographical areas, while the rest are alienated. Take for example, there's not one person represented on executive

Committee or Council of Eighteen from Africa or New York for over a decade and a half.

The concentration of power in the hands of our Caucasian ministers is uncalled for, especially since most offices have term limits.

2. It is incumbent upon the Administration to divide some states, so that minorities may be able to hold down more administrative positions. It is almost impossible for some states' Overseers to function effectively due to the vastness of the geographical areas to cover. How can one person gives proper supervision over California, Texas or New York? At least 4 or 5 more offices can be established in those areas alone.

3. Every region: including Asia, Europe, Africa, N. America, South and Central America, and, the Caribbean must have representatives sitting on the Council of Eighteen (the number on the council must increase to 24 thereabout). That cannot get done unless delegates are selected to vote accordingly. Without such arrangement, the other territories will never get opportunity to serve. An Advisory council does not shape policies.

   The different regions delegates will vote for the leaders of the organization; and the International Council approves or accepts. The General Assembly is the least informed, so the General Assembly should not have the last vote on critical matters (It does not make administrative sense).

4. During the sessions of the General Council, the General Overseer MUST not conduct debates and directs the voting process. By virtue of his position, that presents a high level of conflict of interest. The Overseer must recues himself. That is expected in any organization; an unwillingness to do same will testify to an usurpation of power, a vice every servant of God should avoid.

5. Posts are dissolves at Assembly, therefore, every member should be seated at the designated voting area, unless the member is actually aiding in the voting process.
6. Light refreshment can be served during lengthy periods of deliberations, considering many participants may require such due to medical reasons (even a cup of tea or water would be appreciated. This is one of the only big organizations that don't do that).
7. Districts' positions are waning in some jurisdictions, and in some, the positions are actually eliminated. This is a function that needs attention by the Executive branch

8. If the Assembly conducting business following Roberts Rule of Order, then, the practice of the Executive Committee and its handpicked Motion Committee cannot decide which motion must be selected for adoption by the General council and the General Assembly. Time for this procedure to be abolished!

9. The Black Office should carry the appropriate name, Multicultural Office. It should have a Director and assistant Directors. The Directors should be multicultural a possible. This would spur evangelism, church planting and dissemination of information to the various groups. An African, a Haitian, a Latino, and an Indian would speak volume to inclusion and a sense of pride to those individuals.

10. A deliberate effort in the appointment of black ministers as missionaries to Africa is necessary; this will help to inspire others. They will help with evangelism, theological training and general education, among other things in the regions of Africa. Many many of our black ministers would want such opportunity (presently, we don't have not even 50 men or women from the church in all the black communities on the continent).

11. Every candidate nominated for international offices must be submitted for viewing before election.

Sirs, I am expecting that these items be given your serious consideration, and the requisite actions taken to have them address with a sense of urgency. Failure to do so will lead Bishop Gentles to explore other avenues that may not be considered very kind to the administration. Some of the items should go through the appropriate path as motions, but, regrettably, based upon past experiences, that avenue is futile, since the thing sets a particular way.

Yours for the Master,

Rev. Kenneth Gentles, B.A. M.A.;M.S.

Kenneth L. Gentles

~~July 25, 2018~~

January 11, 2021

NB: These proposal were made for submission at the 2018 Assembly; the proposer was waiting and expecting some administrative changes.
There were a few incidental ones but nothing far reaching.

Bishop Gentles
1/11/2020.

Dear Esteemed Executive Committee, 7/15/21

Christian Greetings.

My name is Greg Carswell and I have served the Church of God for over 30 years as a credentialed minister. The majority of that time has been in the role of a pastor. (I am currently serving at Rural Hall, N.C.) This is now the third church where I have systematically preached and taught through all 14 articles of our Declaration of Faith with my congregation. Each time I do I come away with an increased conviction and appreciation for our doctrine and its Biblical soundness. However, as I have thoroughly done so, one subject that I strongly feel needs to be included is a brief statement expressing our belief as a denomination in God as the Divine Creator. I think this is needful for the following reasons:

1) It is the **first** revelation we are told about God in Genesis 1:1 in the opening statement of the Bible.
"In the beginning **God created** the heaven and the earth."
Then the rest of c. 1& 2 goes on to detail His acts during creation week and shows Him as the origin of all things that exist in the natural and spiritual world.

2) From that beginning, the revelation of Him as Divine Creator continues to reappear prominently throughout the Bible in both the Old and New testaments as a very important doctrine. There are nearly 200 passages from 37 different books of the Bible in which God's creatorship/ownership of the earth and universe is stated or referred to. Among them it is especially noteworthy that Jesus, our Lord, confirms God to be the Creator. (Matthew 19:4, Mark 10:6, John 17:5)

3) This is a premise of Christian theology and doctrine that has come under attack, scrutiny and skepticism perhaps more than anything else we believe in our modern secular society. Ever since "Darwinism" was introduced to our public consciousness and Evolution and "Big-Bang" have been espoused in our public schools, the doctrine of Creationism has been undermined with terrible consequences.

- A society that, as a whole, does not necessarily believe we are directly made in the image and likeness of God, thus diminishing the value we put on the sacredness of human life.
- A society that, as a whole, has come to question and doubt that the Bible can be counted on for its accuracy and authority any longer. After all, if Creationism is incorrect, then that makes the rest of Scripture unreliable as well.

With this being the case, it has been part of my passion both as a pastor and educator to clearly proclaim Scripture's first revelation about God; that He is the Divine Creator and that "All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made." (John 1:3) Also, along with that proclamation, I have always felt it important to provide my listeners with logical reasons and evidences as to why this is a true and trustworthy stand. This, despite the trend of modern science, public education, universities, museums, mainstream media, movies, etc. promoting this contrary explanation of our existence.

So with this all being stated, I would like to propose that we insert into Article 2 the following phrase that We believe:

"In one God, **Creator of all,** eternally existing in three persons; namely, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

This is something we already believe, but with it being stated in our Declaration of Faith it would hopefully result in three things.

1) Reinforce to our members our belief in the doctrine of Creationism.
2) Make a statement to society that we still believe this as a primary and fundamental teaching of Scripture and our Christian faith.
3) With it being stated there it likely will prompt our preachers and teachers to spend more time declaring and defending our belief in God as a "faithful Creator". (I Peter 4:19)

Whereas continuing to not have it stated in our Declaration nor in our Doctrinal Commitments may cause present and future generations to be uncertain of where we stand on this critical truth.

May God bless you for your leadership of our great Church and thank you for considering this proposal.

Respectfully,

Rev. Greg Carswell

260 College St.
Rural Hall, N.C. 27045
(252) 481-2619

New Life Worship

1320 Brown Street
Waxahachie, TX 75165
(972) 923-2455
newlifeworshiptx@gmail.com

Dr. Tim Hill, General Overseer
Church of God International Offices
2490 Keith Street
PO Box 2430
Cleveland, TN 37320

Dr. Tim Hill,

Due to the changes being made regarding the Church of God Administrative Bishop tenures, I would like to present a recommendation to the International Executive Committee regarding consideration to extend the tenure to serve on the International Executive Committee due to the ongoing Global COVID-19 Pandemic.

The past two (2) years have been arduous and even had times where the world seemed to stand still. For this reason, I propose that current elected committee members should be able to remain in office an additional two (2) years, matching the current revised Church of God Administrative Bishop tenure guidelines.

You have done some amazing feats for God displaying both boldness and grace and we appreciate you and the sacrifices you have made, especially during this unprecedented time.

Sincerely,

James E Smith

Dr. James E. Smith, Lead Pastor
New Life Worship Center

JES:js

MOTION BIBLICAL FIDELITY IN GENDER IDENTITY AFFIRMATION

RATIONALE:

While the Church of God is clear on Biblical marriage and sexuality, the General Assembly has not addressed by name the culturally unfolding topic of gender identity.

For the sake of our General church, our local churches, and our church institutions, we should posture our conservative, Biblically faithful denomination to articulate clarity from our highest governing body, the Church of God General Assembly so that our churches and institutions are appropriately aligned, particularly so that our credentialed and non-credentialed employees of the church are aligned with the Doctrine and teaching of the church.

MOTION BIBLICAL FIDELITY IN GENDER IDENTITY AFFIRMATION

AMEND BY ADDING THE FOLLOWING TO S.29 INSTRUCTIONS FOR MINISTERS, II. Marriage and Same-Sex Relationships:

— —
— —

7. No minister shall permit any employee of any church or institution of the church, under their authority, to participate in using or verbally affirming the use of a self-selected gender identity that is incongruent with the biological gender identity given to a person at birth. Ministers are prohibited and must prohibit their employees from encouraging or affirming people and especially people within their care to identify with their sexual temptation, their unbiblical sexual attraction, or a self selected gender or gender pronoun, which is incongruent with their biological gender. Engagement in this behavior is grounds for loss of credentials. Failure of a credentialed minister to prohibit their credentialed or non-credentialed employees of denominationally affiliated institutions or churches, under their authority, from engaging in this behavior is grounds for loss of credentials.

— —

Submitted Sept, 24, 2021 by:

Travis Johnson	Tom Madden	Eli Bonilla	Richie Hughes
Chuck Ramsey	Scott Sheppard	David Smith	Joey Grizzle
David Sulcer	Dr. Randy Eaton	Wesley Weatherford	
Tom Sterbens	Patrick Conley	Kelvin Cobaris	

Church of God Resolution Concerning Human Identity and Sexuality

- **Whereas** we recognize that culture is increasingly embracing a subverted view of human identity, including sexuality, and that traditional biblical sexual norms are being replaced with a "new religion" of sexual orientation, gender fluidity, self-gendering, and a confused sexual mindset and
- **Whereas** proponents of Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality equate racial justice with sexual agendas and issues of sexual identity, we do not associate Biblical justice or race issues with the LGBTQIA agenda, and while we stand against racism of any kind, we celebrate the Bible's clear teaching regarding racial diversity and racial equality, and we resist any belief or action that equates Biblical justice with the acceptance of a sexual orientation that is not aligned with Scripture and
- **Whereas** a growing minority seek to reorient a biblical view of human sexuality with a new norm, and culture is increasingly insisting that the church embrace gender fluid disposition as an alternative to God's expressed will regarding human sexuality and
- **Whereas** the Church of God exists as a guardian of the Gospel and a steward of the Spirit-empowered message of God's redemption in Christ as the only hope of a broken world and
- **Whereas** Christ's love compels us to stand redemptively with a message of truth, grace, and repentance and with a clear definition of human identity and human sexuality that resists today's ubiquitous "self-gendered" ideology and
- **Whereas** the Church of God believes that Scripture is God's final, authoritative, and Spirit-inspired Word to the Church, and that the Bible explains God's design for creation and what constitutes human sexuality, as well as the purpose, order, wholesomeness, and beauty of human sexuality (e.g., Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 2; Genesis 5:4; Matthew 19:4) and
- **Whereas** God created Male and Female and He has established that a person's sexual gender is determined at birth, and even if some commit moral subversion and choose to identify their sexuality as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex, Transitioning, or Asexual (LGBTQIA), let it be recognized that these, and any other, self-determined sexual orientation or gender identity is contrary to God's will and His design of human sexuality and

- **Whereas** those who choose to identify with the LGBTQIA community are to be treated with love, dignity, respect, and grace, but are living in violation to God's gracious and redemptive design and have embraced a culturally constructed, autonomous, gender-confused view of human sexuality and not God's fundamental, creative, and clear willand

- **Whereas** the Bible teaches we all struggle against sin and that we can overcome the power to sin. In 1 Corinthians 10:13 "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it." Further in 1 Corinthians 6:18 we are told to "Flee sexual immorality." Further that according to James 4:7 we are told "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." Because Christ died for sinners and because of the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, all sin, including sexual sin, can be forgiven, and overcome and

- **Whereas** self-identifying with any sexual orientation or gender identity outside of the orthodox biblical view of gender and sexuality, including "gay Christian," "homosexual Christian," or any other unbiblical sexual orientation or gender identity, is an affront to the Gospel because it is contradictory to the new birth, it defines the individual by their sinful desires, rejects the truth of sanctification subsequent to the new birth, and fails to encourage the believer to grow in holiness which the Church of God believes is God's standard of living for His people and

- **Whereas** the Church of God General Council in accordance with the Book of Minutes has always held that human sexuality is defined as either male or female, and that from the beginning this was God's design for marriage, sexual fulfillment, procreation, human companionship, and example of Christ's relationship to His church, and that the sanctity of marriage is between one man and one woman and

- Whereas the Church of God recognizes that mankind is created in the image of God and as a result every person, regardless of their sexual orientation, is to be treated with dignity and respect. However, we do not embrace, condone, or encourage sexual latitude or freedom of sexual expressions or desires that are incongruent with Scripture, nor do we in any way recognize the LGBTQIA lifestyle as normative, and those who embrace such practices are living a sinful lifestyle and rebellious deconstruction of God's revealed and redemptive will and

- **Whereas** the Church of God and all entities (churches, schools, daycares, colleges, universities, seminaries, and businesses) that fall under the governance of the Church of God General Assembly, Church of God General Council, Church of God Executive Committee, and all Church State and Territorial Leadership must maintain a unified position of sexuality in accordance with the Word of God and the Church of God and

- **Whereas** the position of the Church of God is clear in expressing its view of human sexuality and those who are credentialed, hold any office, and are employed by the Church of God are to abide by these declarations

Be it therefore resolved that we affirm our high regard for God's creation and His perfect design for human sexuality, and while we love those who choose to live otherwise, approaching them with consideration that they are created to be imagers of God, and pray for their redemption, we embrace only God's view concerning human sexuality and that it is a good and perfect gift given to all mankind and

Be it further resolved that this subversive, demonic, autonomous, deconstructive, and destructive ideology of sexuality is polarizing our culture---and many in the church, encroaching upon every sphere of culture, and creating an ever-widening gap between how human sexuality is defined and what it means to bring to glorify God and

Be it further resolved that even though culture is increasingly in a protest against God's clear teaching on human identity and human sexuality, and even though the church will have to maneuver in the coming days through a moral and spiritual war zone, the Church of God will endeavor to maintain a humble posture before the Lord, a sensitivity toward the Holy Spirit, and a gracious disposition toward all people and

Be it finally resolved, that as we are compelled by the word of God to "know no man according to the flesh," but to stand firmly in Biblical truth and in Biblical love refusing to join in affirming carnal sexual ideologies so we can pursue the possibilities of anyone, anywhere becoming a "new creation in Christ," redeemed and transformed as declared in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Submitted Sept 26, 2021, by:

Travis Johnson	Tom Madden	Eli Bonilla	Richie Hughes
Chuck Ramsey	Scott Sheppard	David Smith	Joey Grizzle
David Sulcer	Dr. Randy Eaton	Wesley Weatherford	
Tom Sterbens	Patrick Conley	Kelvin Cobaris	