

# CHURCH AMALGAMATIONS AND AFFILIATES

HOW CAN THE CHURCH OF GOD SERVE A LOCAL CHURCH?



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## Preface

### **Mission Statement:**

*To transition and merge independent churches and para-church groups into the Church of God and enhance our abilities to evangelize the nations.*

**Relationships** are Connections: Life is a series of connections from birth until death!

- Two are better than one.* Ecclesiastes 4:9
- There is safety in the multitude of counselors.* Proverbs 11:14
- The member should have care for one another.* 1 Corinthians 12:25

**Networking relationships reach the nations and are vital to spiritual health of the individual and the corporate body!**

**There are benefits of being connected in larger body of people of like faith. The Church of God is a large family with global connections.** Matthew 19:29

Our goal is to network with people of similar backgrounds and connect them with those who will stretch them—expose them to servant leaders who will care, connect, and confirm who they are in Christ.

Benefits: Our mission is to:

### **Add Value**

- Affirm ministers who God has called and anointed for service.
- Assess each person's gifts and network them with capable leadership in the Church of God.
- Build relationships and partnerships on the basis of mutual trust.

### **Validate**

- Provide covering for ministers in the local church.
- Respect the unique heritage of the local congregation.

# Covering & Networking

We resource for the **FINISH** commitment

- **Find** the lost and disenfranchised, including the unreached people groups around the world, engaging them in love and winning them to Christ.
- **Intercede**, making prayer and worship the highest privilege and greatest responsibility of every believer.
- **Network** servant leaders of all generations, including pastors, ministers, and laity for shared ministry engagement.
- **Invest** our resources by strengthening the Church through strategic partnerships for care, church planting, education, leadership development, and discipleship.
- **Send** disciples to all nations, actively sharing the gospel through Holy Spirit empowerment.
- Reap a world **Harvest** with a global church focus on the Great Commission Finish.

Allow a comfortable timeline to work the process with the executive branch as well as the local congregation. The end result will be a union between the two bodies that will have lifelong dividends.

#1 Covering

## Are you covered?

“Our Heritage”

It was 1886, in a crude meeting house on the Tennessee-North Carolina border, where the Church of God traces its roots. There, a group of eight sincere Christians had a deep desire for a closer relationship and life with Christ. Realizing the futility of reforming their own churches, they established a new church whose objective would be to restore sound scriptural doctrines, encourage deeper consecration and promote evangelism and Christian service. Twenty-one years after the formation of the Christian Union at the Barney Creek Meeting House, the growing movement would establish itself permanently as the Church of God.

From this seemingly insignificant origin the Church of God has grown to be one of the most influential worldwide Pentecostal denominations. For over 130 years, the Church of God has been a

distinctive movement focused upon communicating the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit. Presently, the Church of God has a worldwide membership of over 7 million and a consisting of 15 million, with a presence in 183 countries. Church of God leaders are recognized among the most respected Pentecostal leaders.

The call of the Church of God today beckons back to those early days at Barney Creek. Congregations around the globe are experiencing the fire of the Holy Spirit now more than ever. Reports of revivals where hundreds are saved and filled with the Holy Spirit are frequent and ongoing. The call of the Church of God is for world evangelization. It is a call to discipleship and prayer. It is a call to be a channel for Pentecostal revival well into the new millennium. It is a call to The FINISH Commitment.

## CORE VALUES

**Pentecostal Worship** as a lifestyle.

- Holiness as lifestyle.
- Evangelism locally and globally
- Discipleship

We commit ourselves to gather regularly as the local expression of the body of Christ to participate in Pentecostal worship that exalts God; engages the heart, mind, and soul; and challenges to deeper commitment and discipleship. This commitment will be demonstrated by:

- Assisting local churches in planning and preparing for meaningful, anointed worship.
- Equipping pastors and other worship leaders to lead authentically expressed, spiritually alive worship.
- Modeling varying styles and forms of worship that glorify God, and encouraging outreach and service.
- Emphasizing the importance of Biblical stewardship and the centrality of God's Word as elements of worship.

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

We commit ourselves, through our institutions of higher education, to identify and develop individuals whom God has called and given leadership gifts and to challenge them to become servant-leaders. We will demonstrate our commitment by:

Developing lay leaders.

- Creating an environment which men and women with ministry gifts are developed to serve as servant-leaders.
- Equipping, empowering, and releasing lay leaders to serve as ministry partners both inside and outside the church.
- Providing relevant resources and training opportunities for both clergy and laity.
- Encouraging pastors to lead through vision, to communicate the vision to the congregation, and to organize the body and each of its ministry groups so the vision can be realized.

## CARE

We commit ourselves to the challenge of being a church that genuinely cares for one another and for those who are lost, hurting, and needy. We will demonstrate our commitment by:

- Building loving, caring relationships with families, between members, and within the communities we serve.
- Obeying the Care Commission of Christ in Matthew 25.
- Cultivating compassion and showing mercy to the unloved, the undesirable, and the unreached in our society.
- Establishing in each local church some type of outreach ministry that demonstrates our genuine concern and love for the disadvantaged or oppressed.

- Covering through financial accountability
- Spiritual
- Personal
- Legal
- Financial

The principle of local churches giving a tithe of their tithe for worldwide ministry has been a part of the Church of God practice from its earliest days. As a scriptural principle (Genesis 14:18-20; 28:20-22; Malachi 3:10; Luke 11:42; 1 Corinthians 9:6-9; 16:2; Hebrews 7:1-21) and an approved program of the General Assembly, it provides a way for each local church to have a part in contributing to the worldwide ministry of the Church of God.

Through faithfulness and consistency in this practice, the local church extends its ministry far beyond its own borders and releases God's blessings. Local church treasurers send a small percentage of all tithes paid into the treasury to the secretary general in Cleveland, Tennessee, with their monthly report, and an equal amount is also sent to their state treasurer with their monthly report.

Benefits of Belongings:

Covering Activities

- Ministerial Training
- Global Missions investment involvement opportunities
- Fellowship opportunities
- Doctrinal uniformity
- Financial accountability
- Age specific ministries (children's conferences, youth camps, Men's/Women's Events, Senior Adult Events)

## THE DOCTRINAL COMMITMENTS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD

The Church of God has adopted this Declaration of Faith as its standard for the Christian walk. It is this document that all perspective members of the Church of God are asked to commit to upholding.

**We Believe:**

1. In the verbal inspiration of the Bible.
2. In one God eternally existing in three persons; namely, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
3. That Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father, conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary. That Jesus was crucified, buried, and raised from the dead. That He ascended to heaven and is today at the right hand of the Father as the Intercessor.
4. That all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and that repentance is commanded of God for all and necessary for forgiveness of sins.
5. That justification, regeneration, and the new birth are wrought by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ.
6. In sanctification subsequent to the new birth, through faith in the blood of Christ; through the Word, and by the Holy Ghost.

7. Holiness to be God's standard of living for His people.
8. In the baptism with the Holy Ghost subsequent to a clean heart.
9. In speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance and that it is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost.
10. In water baptism by immersion, and all who repent should be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
11. Divine healing is provided for all in the atonement.
12. In the Lord's Supper and washing of the saints' feet.
13. In the premillennial second coming of Jesus. First, to resurrect the righteous dead and to catch away the living saints to Him in the air. Second, to reign on the earth a thousand years.
14. In the bodily resurrection; eternal life for the righteous, and eternal punishment for the wicked.
  - Persons considering affiliating with the Church of God should be familiar with the Practical Commitments as published in the supplement to the *Minutes* of the International General Assembly of the Church of God.

## #2 Networking

### STAYING CONNECTED

The Church of God is a movement of local congregations that value the networking capacity of this global covering. The Kingdom connection of our church enables us to network through relationships, resources, and responsibilities.

### COMMUNITY

The Church of God is striving to stay connected by building a network of cohesive Spirit-filled communities.

### CONNECTIONS

Resources: The Church of God believes in staying connected through the reality that we can reproduce more through Kingdom connections including:

- Programs from state and international offices.
- Website availability at [www.churchofgod.org](http://www.churchofgod.org) and social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.
- Exposing the church to and attending state and international ministries and gatherings.
- Being available to serve at state or international functions when called upon.

## COMMUNICATION

Reporting recognizes a covenant connection:

- ☐ Church Report – Staying current in reporting to validate our financial commitment to the global harvest outreach of the Church of God.
- ☐ Ministerial Report – It communicates your ministerial activities toward the harvest.
- ☐ Both Church and Ministerial Reports are required to be postmarked or submitted online by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month.

## CONCLUSION:

These are a few steps to ensure connectivity in the Church of God.

# #3 Amalgamations & Associate Churches Overview

## WHAT IS AN AMALGAMATED CHURCH?

- ☐ Accepts the faith, government, polity, and practices of the Church of God and abides by the actions of the International General Assembly.
- ☐ Accepts the basic doctrinal commitments, teachings, and practical commitments as stated in the Church of God Book of Discipline, Church Order, and Governance (Minutes of the International General Assembly).
- ☐ An official resolution. Once adopted, members shall have the same rights as other Church of God members.
- ☐ Pastor shall submit to a background check and shall secure Church of God ministerial credentials in accordance with Church of God polity. Once credentials are obtained, the minister has all the rights in regard to voting and eligibility for election/appointment as other Church of God ministers.
- ☐ Is eligible for assistance in underwriting, securing loans, etc., from the state/regional office, if funds are available, and appropriate criteria is met to satisfy the loan process.
- ☐ Is included in the Church of God Group Exemption Letter from the Internal Revenue Service to the Church of God and becomes part of the Church of God's 501c (3) covering.
- ☐ Shall make monthly reports to the state/regional and general offices with appropriate funds.
- ☐ An amalgamated church joins the Church of God and transfers its property to a Church of God Warranty Deed to be held in trust for the local congregation and the Church of God.

## WHAT IS AN ASSOCIATE CHURCH?

- Accepts the faith, government, polity, and practices of the Church of God. Also abides by the actions of the International General Assembly as it relates to their status as an associate church.
- Accepts the basic doctrinal commitments, teachings, and practical commitments as stated in the Church of God Book of Discipline, Church Order and Governance (Minutes of the International General Assembly).
- An official resolution adopted by the congregation is required. Once adopted, members shall have the same rights as other Church of God members.
- Pastor shall submit to a background check and shall secure Church of God ministerial credentials in accordance with Church of God polity. Once credentials are obtained, the minister has all the rights in regard to voting and eligibility for election/appointment as other Church of God ministers.
- Shall make monthly reports to the state/regional and general offices with the same financial accountability as International General Assembly congregations.
- Retains ownership and control of property.
- Remains responsible for all indebtedness, liabilities, and other encumbrances of property.
- Is ineligible for any underwriting assistance or loan guarantee from the state/regional office or the International Offices.
- Is not included in the Church of God Group Exemption Letter from the Internal Revenue Service to the Church of God.
- Retains the right to withdraw its affiliation with the Church of God.
- Can remove its associate status by placing the church properties on a Church of God warranty deed with the approval of the administrative bishop and the state/regional council.

## #4 Orientation for overall relationships and structure in the Church of God

### LOCAL

- District and local pastors

### STATE

- Administrative Bishops

### INTERNATIONAL OFFICES

- International Executive Council

### REPORTING

- State and General
- World Missions
- USA Missions
- Youth and Christian Education
- Benefits Board
- Licenses Process



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## STAY IN TOUCH

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