

# California Eldership Churches of God in North America Constitution

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## Article I. Name

The name of this body shall be “The California Eldership of the Churches of God in North America”.

## Article II. Object

The object of this body shall be the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ, the salvation of souls, the organizing and building up of local Churches of God, the care and supervision of the churches and ministers, and the spiritual, financial and physical support and furtherance of the missions and other projects of the California Eldership and Churches of God General Conference.

## Article III. Membership

The membership of the Eldership shall consist of all the ministers who have been granted life ordination by this body, or have been received by transfer from another Conference, all holders of annual licenses from this body, and representatives from the Churches on the following basis:

- Each church shall be entitled to be represented by all elders, all deacons, two lay delegates and two youth delegates.
- Each church having thirty or more members shall be entitled to one additional lay delegate and one additional youth delegate for each additional twenty members or major fraction thereof.
- In electing lay delegates and youth delegates, each church should include members of both sexes, if possible.
- All delegates shall be elected by the church, but any church having a youth organization may permit that organization to nominate the youth delegates.
- All delegates shall be elected from the members in good standing and having been a member of a local Church of God for one year, except where that is impossible in the case of new churches.
- The Church Clerk shall furnish to the Clerk of the Eldership a list of properly elected delegates (and alternates, if any).

The following officers shall by virtue of their office be members of the Eldership:

- Treasurer and Statistical Clerk.

## Article IV. Boundaries

The boundaries of the California Eldership shall be composed of the States of California and Arizona.

## Article V. Time of Meeting

This Eldership shall meet biennially at such time and place as may be agreed upon at the previous session, or by the Standing Committee. Special meetings may be called by the Standing Committee and due notice shall be given of such meetings.

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## Article VI. Officers

The officers of the Eldership shall be a President, a Vice President, a Clerk, a Treasurer, and a Statistical Clerk.

- The president and vice president shall be ordained ministers in good standing in this Eldership.
- The Clerk shall be elected from among the members of the Eldership.
- The Treasurer and Statistical Clerk shall be a member of a local Church of God in the Eldership, and shall be members of the Eldership by virtue of their office.

**A majority shall elect these officers at each biennial Eldership session.**

A majority shall also elect the members of Boards and Committees required by the Constitution and not appointed by the President.

## Article VII. Term of Office

The officers of this Eldership shall serve from one Eldership session to the next Eldership session, unless otherwise stated in this Constitution. Eldership sessions are held biennially.

## Article VIII. Nominations

Before each election nominations may be received from the floor, and when several persons are to be elected to the same committee or board at least one-third more than the number to be elected shall be nominated. This is applicable according to the amount of members present. If enough members are not present to achieve the one-third more, then the nominees with the highest amount of votes can be elected as approved by the voting Eldership members present.

## Article IX. Duties of Officers

### *Section 1.*

**The duties of the President shall be:**

- To preside over the sessions of the Eldership, to decide points of order, to appoint any committees not otherwise provided for, to endorse all orders drawn on the Treasurer, and to perform any other duties usually associated with the office of President or that may be assigned to him, including the signing of all certificates/licenses.
- The President shall be ex-officio, a member of the Standing Committee and a member and chairman of the Financial Board of Directors of the Corporation. In the absence of the rules of order, the president shall follow Robert's Rules of Order.

### *Section 2.*

**The duties of the Vice President shall be:**

- To perform the duties of the President when the President is absent or vacates the chair. He shall also perform the duties of the President if the latter becomes incapacitated during the year and shall succeed to the presidency if the office becomes vacant. The Vice President shall be ex-officio a member of the Standing Committee.

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## *Section 3.*

### **The duties of the Clerk shall be:**

- To faithfully keep a record of the proceedings of the Eldership, to transcribe the same into a book provided for that purpose, to provide Eldership summaries for the Church of God General Conference as required, to document all orders to the Treasurer as directed by the Eldership or the Standing Committee, and to perform any other duties usually associated with the office of Clerk or Secretary, or that may be assigned to the Clerk. The Clerk shall be ex-officio a member of the Standing Committee and a member and Clerk of the Financial Board of Directors of the Corporation.

## *Section 4.*

### **The duties of the Statistical Clerk shall be:**

- To furnish copies of the Eldership Statistical Report Form to the ministers of the churches, receiving and tabulating their reports and furnishing a Statistical Report to the Eldership Clerk.

## *Section 5.*

### **The duties of the Treasurer shall be:**

- To receive from the churches and faithfully handle all funds belonging to the Eldership, paying out the same only upon orders signed by the President and the Clerk, as directed by the Eldership or the Standing Committee.
- The treasurer shall give bond in an amount determined at the Eldership session by the Financial Board of Directors.

## **Article X. Eldership Biennial Session**

Each Biennial Eldership session shall begin at 9:00 am of the day appointed. An opening worship service shall be held on the preceding evening, said service to be in charge of the host pastor.

The first session shall be opened with devotional exercises conducted by the President of the preceding Eldership session, or in his absence by one appointed by the Standing Committee, after which the Eldership shall be constituted by the President and Clerk of the preceding Eldership session, or in their absence by two members of the Standing Committee appointed for this purpose. They shall enroll all members present and conduct the election of officers.

## **Article XI. Standing Committee**

### *Section 1.*

#### **The Standing Committee shall:**

- Consist of five members. The President, Vice President and the Clerk of the Eldership shall be members by virtue of their office.
- Two additional members shall be elected by the Eldership and at least one of these shall **not** be an ordained or licensed minister.
- Have the power to make or change boundaries; to appoint the ministers to the several stations when vacancies occur; to grant transfers to other church conferences, to ministers in good standing in this Eldership, and to receive into this Eldership ministers who may come in with transfers from other church conferences in the interim between biennial Eldership sessions.

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- Have power to fill all vacancies that may occur in any office, Board or Committee in the interval between the biennial sessions of the Eldership.
- Have supervision over the churches and pastors of the Eldership and shall have authority to make suggestions to both pastors and church officials in matters pertaining to the spiritual welfare of the churches.
- Have supervision over the moral and official conduct of the ministers and shall have authority to act as intermediary between ministers seeking a new field and church councils at change of ministers.

## Article XII. Stationing Committee

### The Stationing Committee shall:

- Consist of five members, whose duty shall be to arrange the appointment of the pastors to the several churches on an annual basis. The Stationing committee will meet at the June quarterly meeting in the off year of the biennial Eldership sessions, and place the ministers in their several churches, giving due consideration to the expressed wishes of both the churches and ministers.
- The recommendations of this committee shall become binding when its report is adopted by the Eldership. If the report is rejected by a majority vote, it shall be re-committed to the committee. It shall not be debatable, or subject to amendment on the floor of the Eldership.

## Article XIII. Financial Board of Directors

The Financial Board of Directors of the Corporation, **THE CALIFORNIA ELDERSHIP OF THE CHURCHES OF GOD IN NORTH AMERICA** shall:

- Consist of the President and Clerk of the Eldership, who shall be the chairman and clerk respectively of the said Board, the Eldership Treasurer and two trustees, who shall be elected at each Eldership session. At least one elected member shall be an active pastor.
- The Corporation, acting through the Financial Board of Directors during the interval between sessions of the Eldership, shall hold and control all properties belonging to the Eldership.
- All real property, purchased for the use of any of the churches, shall be deeded to the Corporation.
- All deeds, notes or other instruments by which real property shall be sold, conveyed or encumbered, shall be signed by the President and Clerk, with the seal of the Corporation affixed by the Clerk, as directed and authorized by the Financial Board of Directors and approved by the Eldership or the Standing Committee.
- This Board shall prepare the budget for the California Eldership, and apportion of the total sum needed, together with the Eldership's share of the General Conference budget, among the several churches.
- Elected members shall function during the entire Eldership session, suggesting plans of finance and assisting churches that have financial problems.
- The Treasurer of the Eldership shall be responsible to call the first meeting of this Board.

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## Article XIV. Board of Education

The Board of Education shall:

- Consist of three ordained ministers.
- They shall be elected at each Eldership session.
- This Board shall be the Licensing and Ordination Committee of the Eldership. It shall recommend for Annual License and for Life Ordination those possessing the Scriptural qualifications for the Christian ministry.
- This Board shall meet with all ministers holding annual licenses at the June quarterly meeting (in-between biennial Eldership sessions) and recommend license according to this meeting.

## Article XV. Pastors

Each minister appointed, as pastor of a church shall:

- Serve for one year and shall be subject to reappointment at the discretion of the Eldership. He shall not discontinue his service during the year, unless the Standing Committee shall first have accepted his resignation, or the Standing Committee shall have removed him for just cause.
- No pastor shall leave his church for a period longer than one month without consulting the Standing Committee.
- In addition to the public preaching of the Word, he shall give diligence to “do the work of an evangelist” in winning souls and to be a faithful Shepard to the flock of God committed to his care.
- He shall see that the Ordinances of Washing the Saints’ Feet and the Lord’s Supper are observed at least twice a year in each church, more frequently unless circumstances make more frequent observation inadvisable.
- He shall keep careful records of his pastoral work and see that proper records are kept by the church clerk and shall furnish to the Statistical Clerk of the Eldership the information required by the General Conference

## Article XVI. Accredited Ministers

### *Section 1.*

No person shall be considered an accredited minister of the Churches of God without a regular Certificate of Ordination, said Certificate to be given for life, subject to recall or annulment for any cause deemed sufficient by the Eldership.

In case a minister whose certificate of Ordination has been annulled and recalled shall fail or refuse to deliver the same, the Eldership or the Standing Committee is authorized to use such means as it may deem suitable to inform the public that the said minister’s credentials are no longer valid, or to take steps to recover the said Certificate of Ordination by legal purposes.

### *Section 2.*

All ministers shall be expected to attend the Biennial Session of the Eldership, or to report to the Eldership in writing. Any minister failing to attend or report for two successive sessions will be subject to the attention of the Standing Committee and/or the Board of Education.

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## *Section 3.*

All ministers officiating a marriage ceremony shall adhere to the following: Marriage is a biblical institution established by God as clearly described in the Scriptures. The California Eldership of the Churches of God in North America recognizes that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment. Accordingly, the California Eldership churches, its pastors and staff will only officiate marriages between one man and one woman.

## **Article XVII. Expelled Ministers**

Any person expelled from the Eldership, or whose Certificate of Ordination has been recalled, shall not be recognized as a minister by any pastor or any churches within the bounds of this Eldership; and such persons shall be denied the privileges of any of the Eldership's pulpits.

## **Article XVIII. Transfers**

Ministers from another Church Conference desiring to affiliate with this Eldership shall present a formal Transfer from the Church Conference, to which they belong, to the Board of Education. The Board shall have discretionary power to conduct such examination or inquiry as they may see fit. They shall report their findings to the Eldership or the Standing Committee. If the report is favorable, the minister shall be enrolled as a member of the California Church of God Eldership. Any minister who is a member in good standing of the Eldership, desiring to remove or labor in another church conference, shall be granted a Transfer at his request, but subject to the requirements of the Eldership of his choice.

## **Article XIX. Candidates for the Ministry**

Any person desiring to enter the Gospel ministry under this Eldership shall first have been a member of a Church of God for at least one year. However, in the case of a licensed or ordained minister coming to us from another bible-believing organization or denomination with a good recommendation from the organization from which he comes, the Board of Education may, at its discretion, modify or waive the requirement of one year of membership, but in no case shall any recommendation be made until after the candidate becomes a member of the Church of God. The candidate shall present a written recommendation from the official board and the pastor of the church to which he belongs, showing that he is in good standing and co-operative with the interest of the Churches of God and shall appear in person before the Board of Education. He shall be subject to questioning concerning his conversion, call to the ministry, doctrinal beliefs, and his educational personal and spiritual qualifications for the sacred office to which he aspires. The result of this examination shall be kept on file. The Board shall use its discretion in making a recommendation to the Eldership.

## **Article XX. Amendments**

This constitution may be amended at any regular biennial Eldership Session, after a second reading of the proposed Amendment, by two-thirds vote of the members present.