

Advent Christian General Conference of America
ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION and BY-LAWS

Organized at Salem, Massachusetts, October 16, 1860. Adopted at Aurora, Illinois, June 12, 1920, and revised and amended at later meetings.

ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

ARTICLE I - Name

The name of this body shall be the Advent Christian General Conference of America.

ARTICLE II - Object

The object of this body shall be to serve the Advent Christian people in furthering the fellowship of their faith, in advancing the ordering of their church life, and in encouraging and administering their common endeavors to fulfill the Great Commission in all its intent, as follows:

1. To serve in furthering the fellowship of their faith.
 - a. By establishing the Statement of Faith.
 - b. By establishing the Declaration of Principles.
 - c. By setting forth Enduring Resolutions.
 - d. By providing a design for united action.
 - e. By organizing gatherings for fellowship.
 - f. By providing an orderly means of communication.
2. To serve in advancing the ordering of their church life.
 - a. By establishing minimum criteria for denominational membership.
 - b. By establishing minimum criteria for the ordination of ministers.
 - c. By establishing credentialing committees of review and appeal for denominational members and ministers.
 - d. By addressing various concerns of the local church through Conferences, Regions, and the General Conference.
 - e. By providing means of cooperation with other organizations and movements.
 - f. By providing a program of stewardship and denominational finance.
 - g. By organizing retirement benefits for the welfare of Advent Christian ministers and workers.
 - h. By providing a corporation to receive, hold in trust, or otherwise care for all properties and business matters delegated to it by the Association.
3. To serve in encouraging and administering their common endeavors to fulfill the Great Commission.
 - a. By providing a program of leadership development.
 - b. By providing for missionary outreach at home and abroad.
 - c. By providing a program of church planting.
 - d. By publishing materials for the benefit of Advent Christian churches and ministers.

In fulfilling these objectives, this body will promote and express the fulfillment of our Lord's great prayer for the unity of His people (John 17:11-23).

ARTICLE III - Corporation

There shall be a corporation of the General Conference, as defined above, provision for which shall be made by appropriate By-Laws.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I - Membership

Section 1. The membership of this body shall consist of churches which are members of Advent Christian Conferences or Regions; of those Conferences which are members of one of the five Advent Christian Regional Associations; of the same Regional Associations of which the Conferences are members.

Section 2. Membership shall only include those regions, conferences, churches, and associate member organizations, that:

- a. Affirm and uphold the Advent Christian Statement of Faith
- b. Affirm and uphold the Enduring Resolutions of the General Conference
- c. Financially contribute, directly or indirectly, to the ministry of the General Conference
- d. Cooperate with the provisions set forth in these Articles of Association and Bylaws

Section 3. Membership as an Advent Christian Conference shall be granted by the Advent Christian General Conference with the recommendation of the Executive Council and acceptance by the delegate body by a two-thirds vote at any regular or special meeting of the delegate body. Removal from membership shall follow the same procedure. Membership as an Advent Christian Conference shall require that:

- a. Any conferences applying for membership must include at least six Advent Christian churches.
- b. These churches do not maintain membership in another Advent Christian Conference.
- c. The membership of these churches does not violate the territorial integrity of a recognized Advent Christian Conference.
- d. The conference maintains a ministerial committee in good standing for the credentialing of Advent Christian ministers and churches.

Section 4. Membership as an Advent Christian Regional Association shall require that the membership of the regional association includes at least one recognized Advent Christian Conference, that includes at least six Advent Christian churches in its membership, or that the region includes at least six Advent Christian Churches in its membership and a regional ministerial committee in good standing. Such membership shall be granted by the Advent Christian General Conference with the recommendation of the Executive Council and acceptance by the delegate body by a two-thirds vote at any regular or special meeting of the delegate body. Removal from membership shall follow the same procedure.

Section 5. Any organization located in North America, serving a constituency of the Advent Christian General Conference, may become an Associate Member of the Advent Christian General Conference upon the recommendation of the Executive Council and acceptance by the delegate body by a two-thirds vote at any regular or special meeting of the delegate body. Removal of associate members shall follow the

same procedure. Associate Members that receive funding from the Advent Christian General Conference are exempt from Article I, Section 2.c.

ARTICLE II - Meeting

Section 1. Each **church** with membership in one of the Conferences shall be entitled to one delegate for each 50 members or major fraction thereof, provided each church shall be entitled to at least one delegate. Each **Conference** with membership in one of the Regions shall be entitled to one delegate for each 100 members or major fraction thereof, at least one-half of whom must be lay members, provided each Conference shall be entitled to at least one delegate. Each **Conference president** shall have a delegate vote. Each **Regional Superintendent** shall have a delegate vote. Each of the fifteen members of the **Executive Council**, provided for in Article IV, Section 2, shall have a delegate vote. Each **Associate Member** under the provisions of Article I Section 2 shall be entitled to two delegates.

Section 2. No delegate shall carry more than one delegate vote.

Section 3. Each officer of this body shall be entitled to one vote at any regular or special meeting of this body.

ARTICLE III - Meetings

Section 1. Meetings of this body shall be held triennially at such time, date, and place as the body shall designate; but, in case the body shall not exercise this prerogative, the time, date, and place of such meetings shall be determined by the Executive Council.

Section 2. Special meetings shall be called by the President and Secretary whenever requested to do so by the Executive Council.

Section 3. Regular or special meetings of this body shall be called at least four weeks before the date fixed for such meetings by the President and Recording Secretary by publishing a notice of such meeting in the denominational press, and by mailing written or printed notices of such meeting to each member of the body at least four weeks before the date set for such meeting.

Section 4. The budget year and the fiscal year for the General Conference shall be the calendar year.

ARTICLE IV - Officers, Executive Council, and Committees

Section 1. The elective officers of this body shall be a President; five Vice Presidents, who shall be the elected presiding officers of the five respective Regions; and a Recording Secretary, who shall serve as Clerk of the Advent Christian General Conference.

Section 2. The President, Recording Secretary, five Vice Presidents, one additional member from each of the five Regions, and three members at large shall constitute the Executive Council (see Article VII, Section 3).

Section 3. The Executive Council shall:

- (a) Recommend statements of policy and polity for the action of General Conference as required;
- (b) Hold meetings as needed to provide for necessary legislative and/or administrative decisions between General Conference sessions;
- (c) Provide for the management and execution of the financial and all other activities of this body between triennial sessions;
- (d) Employ the Executive Director, who shall be a member in good standing in an Advent Christian church, and determine his salary;
- (e) Approve employment of personnel as recommended by the Executive Director.
- (f) Direct such subsidiary corporations as may be necessary to the functioning of the total General Conference program;
- (g) Review and make necessary changes in the United Ministries budget for submission to General Conference;
- (h) serve as a review board for organizational problems;
- (i) Approve the proposed program for the triennial session of the General Conference;
- (j) Appoint the following committees: Program Committee, Business Committee, and Resolutions Committee, the Chairmen of which shall have the power to move the adoption of matters proposed by their respective committees, and the Committee on Pensions.

Section 4. A Program Committee shall be appointed triennially, whose responsibility it shall be to arrange, at least three months in advance, a program for the upcoming General Conference of vital topics relative to our work and assign speakers to present the same.

Section 5. Business Committee shall be appointed well in advance of the triennial meeting, whose responsibility it shall be to receive, screen, prepare, and move all items of business which come to the Conference floor, other than items from the Program and Resolutions Committees. It shall not, however, have the right to modify items that come from the Executive Council without the Council's express consent.

Section 6. A Resolutions Committee shall be appointed well in advance of the triennial meeting whose responsibility it shall be to formulate, receive, review, edit, or project recommendations for resolutions and bring the same to the delegate body for its consideration.

Section 7. There shall be a Committee on Pensions consisting of at least four members appointed by the Executive Council and the Executive Director, who shall be a member ex officio without vote. It shall be the responsibility of this committee to maintain a Pension Plan with relief and retirement benefits for Advent Christian ministers, missionaries and other full-time denominational employees. The Committee shall establish policies and procedures governing the administration of the Pension Plan. The Director of Finance of the Advent Christian General Conference shall be the administrator of the plan; shall provide information to the Committee on Pensions pertaining to the operation of the plan; and may advise the Committee of aspects calling for consideration of policy changes. The Committee shall also provide for the promotion of the plan as needed within the limits of resources available. The Committee on Pensions shall report annually to the Executive Council through the administrator; and its policies are subject to

review by the Council. The members of the Committee shall be appointed for four-year terms; but at the outset, members may be appointed for lesser terms to effect the staggering of dates when terms shall expire.

Section 8. There shall be a AC Chaplaincy Commission consisting of five members appointed by the Executive Council in conjunction with the triennial convention, whose responsibility it shall be to assist Advent Christians in making application for chaplaincy service to endorse the applications of those whom it approves, to assist and encourage those who are accepted throughout their period of service in any way appropriate and possible to it, and to aid them as may be necessary in securing appropriate employment after discharge.

Section 9. The Executive Council shall act as Trustees of the Powers Estate, whose responsibility it shall be to distribute income from the Trust according to the provisions of the will which created it and a Table of Allocation controlled by the Executive Council.

Section 10. A Committee on Nominations shall be elected at each triennial session of the General Conference, whose responsibility it shall be to serve at the succeeding triennial session. This Committee shall be required to provide a single ballot containing at least two names for each office, Executive Council position, and Committee membership, except those positions restricted in Article IV, Section 1, and Article VII, Section 4.

Section 11. The elective officers, Executive Council members, and committees named herein shall be nominated in the following manner: (a) The General Conference Vice President shall be nominated by the five Regional Associations; (b) the President, the Recording Secretary, the Executive Council members, the Trustees of the Powers Estate, the Nominating Committee, the Standards Committee (see Article VIII), and such other committees as may be specified by the Executive Council, shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee.

ARTICLE V - Duties of Officers

Section 1. The President shall preside at the sessions of General Conference, shall be Chairman of the Executive Council, and shall perform such other duties as usually pertain to the office of President.

Section 2. The Recording Secretary shall record the minutes of all sessions of General Conference of the Executive Council and shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Executive Council.

Section 3. The Executive Director shall be the chief operating officer of the Advent Christian General Conference, and as such has sole responsibility to the Executive Council for the management of all available resources of the organization, including finance and personnel, to achieve the stated objectives of the denomination and provide for its continuity. His functions shall be defined by the Executive Council, to which he is accountable. He shall be a member ex officio of all committees, without vote, except for those to which he is elected or appointed.

Section 4. The duties of the Vice Presidents shall be to have general oversight of the General Conference program in their respective Regions. In case of the absence of the President at any regular or special meeting, the Vice Presidents present shall designate one of their number to preside.

ARTICLE VI - Reports of Associate Members

Section 1. The executive officer of each Associate Member shall file with the Executive Director a copy of the annual financial report of his organization.

Section 2. Each Associate Member shall be required to present in writing to the Executive Director, at least six weeks before the triennial meeting, or in the year ad-interim six weeks before the meeting of the Executive Council, a statement of its plan and financial needs for the year ensuing.

ARTICLE VII - Elections and Appointments

Section 1. The President, five Vice Presidents, and Recording Secretary, who constitute the officers of this body, shall be elected by written ballot and shall hold their positions during the term of three years, or until their successors are elected. The President and the Recording Secretary shall be limited to three successive terms. Any of the five Vice Presidents who is replaced as the President of his region during the triennium shall lose his position on the Executive Council, which shall proceed to elect his successor in his place.

Section 2. In case a vacancy occurs in the office of the Presidency, the Recording Secretary shall call a meeting of the Executive Council at the earliest date possible, which Council shall proceed to appoint one of the five Vice Presidents to fill the unexpired term of the office of President for the remaining period of the triennium only.

Section 3. The five Regional Representatives and the three members-at-large of the Executive Council shall be elected for staggered terms of nine years and shall not serve for more than one elected term successively. To effect these staggered terms, the first member at large and the representative from the Western Region will be elected in 1978; the second member at large and the representatives from the Appalachian and Southern Regions will be elected in 1981; and the other member at large and the representatives from the Central and Eastern Regions will be elected in 1984; the present hold-over terms being extended to conform thereto.

Section 4. Each Region shall submit to the Nominating Committee one or more names to be nominees for the regional members of the Executive Council. One of the two representatives from each region, either the president or regional member, shall be a layman.

Section 5. Vacancies occurring in the interim between general sessions may be filled by the Executive Council.

Section 6. The terms of office of all elected personnel shall begin with the final adjournment of the meeting which elects them.

ARTICLE VIII – General Conference Standards Committee

Section 1. Every Advent Christian Conference shall maintain a ministerial committee for the credentialing of Advent Christian ministers and churches. While not required, Advent Christian Regions may elect to maintain a ministerial committee for the same purpose. To remain in good standing, a ministerial committee must include a minimum of three members ordained to Advent Christian ministry and uphold

the standards of Article I, Section 2. The committee may include laypersons, provided that such members constitute no more than 25% of the committee. These committees are authorized to issue and revoke Advent Christian credentials for ministry and to make recommendations for the decision of the Conference delegate body regarding the membership of churches in the Conference. The decisions of these ministerial committees shall be recognized by the Advent Christian General Conference unless they are (1) overturned by their Conference or Regional delegate body or (2) further appeal is made to the General Conference Standards Committee through which their decision may be overturned by the General Conference delegate body.

Section 2. The General Conference Standards Committee (GCSC) shall oversee the denominational membership and credentials of all Advent Christian regions, conferences, churches, ministers, and associate members. The members of this committee shall include an ordained regional superintendent and one ordained Advent Christian minister from each region as elected by the delegate body of said minister's region for a term of three years, not to exceed two consecutive terms. In such cases in which the regional superintendent is not ordained or the region lacks a superintendent, the concerned regional board may appoint an ordained minister from their region to this committee until such time as a regional superintendent can serve in this capacity. The committee shall select one of its members by the vote of the majority to serve as the chair of the committee.

Section 3. The GCSC shall be empowered to determine the course of action that should be taken as far as it concerns the standing of any Advent Christian region, conference, church, or minister. The committee shall convene at least twice a year to (1) review reports that shall be submitted annually by every Advent Christian ministerial committee, (2) receive any relevant appeals for adjudication, (3) consider matters within the committee's scope of oversight deserving inquiry, (4) and make any necessary determinations, referring any necessary actions to the parties concerned and the most immediate denominational body of oversight. Whenever such determinations are not heeded by those being advised, the GCSC shall be empowered to present a recommended action to the General Conference delegate body, up to and including removal from denominational membership and revoking denominational credentials.

Section 4. The approval of any such determinations or recommended actions shall require that a minimum of two-thirds of the members vote in favor of the proposed motion; excluded from this percentage are any committee positions left vacant.

Section 5. Before any appeal is made to the GCSC, it should first be heard by the relevant conference or regional ministerial committee. If after such a hearing an appeal is made to the GCSC, any costs involved in this further appeal shall be advanced by the party appealing to the GCSC. In the event that the decision is favorable to the appellant, the costs will be refunded by the General Conference.

ARTICLE IX - Corporation of the General Conference

Section 1. The members of this corporation shall consist of the fifteen members of the Executive Council provided for in Article IV, Section 2, plus the Executive Director as provided for in Article IV, Section 3.

Section 2. The term for which members of this corporation shall be chosen shall be the same as the term they serve on the Executive Council, and they shall hold office until their successors are duly elected and

qualified; provided that the Executive Director shall hold office concurrent with his tenure of office as Executive Director.

Section 3. Vacancies occurring in the interim between General Conference sessions may be filled by the Executive Council in accordance with Article VII, Sections 2 and 5.

Section 4. The corporation shall receive and hold all property, real and personal, of the General Conference, and all property, real and personal, which shall be conveyed to it in trust or otherwise for the benefit of Advent Christian churches, Conferences, or Associate Members, or of any Advent Christian church, Conference, or Associate Member; and, acting for the General Conference between the meetings of the Conference in all business matters not otherwise delegated or reserved; shall do such acts and discharge such trusts as belong to such a corporation, and are in conformity with the Articles of Association, rules and instructions of the General Conference.

Section 5. The officers of the Corporation shall correspond to the officers of the General Conference, as designated in Article IV, Section 1, in the following manner: The President of General Conference shall be the Chairman of the Corporation, and the Recording Secretary of General Conference shall be the Clerk of the Corporation.

Section 6. The Corporation may adopt for its government and the management of its affairs, standing by-laws and rules not inconsistent with its charter nor with the Articles of Association, By-Laws and rules of the General Conference.

Section 7. The Corporation shall make such reports to the General Conference as the Conference may require.

ARTICLE X - Amendments to Articles of Association

The Articles of Association of this body may be altered, changed, or amended at any regular or special meeting by a two-thirds vote, provided that notice of such alteration, change, or amendment, setting forth the proposed changes, shall have been published in the denominational press for at least four weeks immediately preceding such meeting.

ARTICLE XI - Amendments to By-Laws

The By-Laws of this body may be amended by two-thirds vote at any regularly called meeting.

ARTICLE XII - Declaration of Principles Change

Any action which would effect change of the Advent Christian Declaration of Principles must be submitted to the Executive Council by an Advent Christian church, conference, or region or member of the Executive Council. The Executive Council shall receive such proposals and shall appoint a Task Force to consider the Biblical basis of the proposal as well as its impact upon and implication for the polity and unity of the Advent Christian denomination. The Task Force shall work in consultation with the originator of the proposal and the Executive Director. They will bring their recommendation to the Executive Council for action no later than one year after the proposal is first brought to the Executive Council. If approved by a three-fourths vote of the Executive Council at the meeting at which the recommendation is

presented, the proposed change shall then be brought to the delegates at the next regular General Conference session. A three-fourths vote by ballot of the delegates shall be required for ratification of the recommended change. Notice of the recommended change shall be stated in the call to meeting and communicated throughout the denomination six months, three months, and one month immediately preceding the meeting of the delegate body.

ARTICLE XIII - Statement of Faith Change

Any action which would effect change of the Advent Christian Statement of Faith must be submitted to the Executive Council by an Advent Christian church, conference, or region or member of the Executive Council. The Executive Council shall receive such proposals and shall appoint a Task Force to consider the Biblical basis of the proposal as well as its impact upon and implication for the polity and unity of the Advent Christian denomination. The Task Force shall work in consultation with the originator of the proposal and the Executive Director. They will bring their recommendation to the Executive Council for action no later than one year after the proposal is first brought to the Executive Council. If approved by a three-fourths vote of the Executive Council at the meeting at which the recommendation is presented, the proposed change shall then be brought to the delegates at the next regular General Conference session. A three-fourths vote by ballot of the delegates shall be required for ratification of the recommended change. Notice of the recommended change shall be stated in the call to meeting and communicated throughout the denomination six months, three months, and one month immediately preceding the meeting of the delegate body.

ARTICLE XIV - Rules of Order

The business of this body shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE XV - Order of Business

The following shall be a suggested Order of Business for the triennial sessions of General Conference:

- 1.Devotions
- 2.Welcome
- 3.Review of Minutes of Previous Session
- 4.Organization
- 5.President's Address
- 6.Reports
- 7.Report of Committee on Nominations
- 8.Election of Officers and Committees
- 9.Report of Committees
 - a. Business
 - b. Resolutions
10. Approval of Minutes
11. Adjournment

Amended 6/1993, 6/1996, 2/1999, 7/2011, 4/2021, 8/2023, 8/2026