

Bylaws of the Church of God (Seventh Day) International Federation

Preamble

The Church of God (Seventh Day) International Federation statements of Vision, Purpose, Mission, and Authority.

Vision

The Church of God (Seventh Day) International Federation is a fellowship of churches and conferences, connected ~~across this~~ around the world, ~~yet~~ united in its diverse gifts, talents, cultures, and callings. Its corporate identity ~~in is~~ its commitment to the centrality of Christ and the observance of the Ten Commandments including the seventh day Sabbath (Rev 14:12) as it increasingly reflects the image of Christ's Body (1 Cor 12:12) and thereby achieving a greater vision than the sum of its individual parts.

Purpose

The purpose of the Church of God (Seventh Day) International Federation is to facilitate the development, unity and growth of its churches and conferences around the world, forming them into a cohesive and vibrant Christ-community. The Federation joyfully fulfills its unique role in the greater Body of Christ, and in the world, through the transformative power of the gospel, teaching biblical truth and its application, until Jesus returns.

Mission

The mission of the Church of God (Seventh Day) International Federation is to achieve, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, its stated vision and purpose through an administrative structure that is defined reflected by Godly leadership, measurable goals and objectives, clear communication, a sustainable financial model, with innovation and creativity. In an environment of trust, mutual accountability, and a commitment to assist, encourage, and understand one another, the Federation prayerfully embraces Jesus' heart for the church He is building ~~— in reconciling lost humanity to God, through Jesus' blood for the glory of the Father to the ends of the earth.~~

Statement of Authority

With Christ as its head (Colossians 1:18), with the Bible as its sole authority for doctrine and Christian conduct (2 Timothy 3:16), with its commitment to walking a healthy balance between autonomy and interdependence (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:2-5), and with its bylaws and organizing documents, the Church of God (Seventh Day) International Federation retains the right to function as a global ecclesiastical entity, to seek and protect the spiritual wellbeing of its members, to conduct the business of the Church, including the faithful stewardship of finances, to protect itself against liability and civil interference, and to protect its membership and material interests.

Charter Members

National churches, conferences or councils which were affiliated with the Church of God (Seventh Day) with principal offices in Denver, Colorado, USA, and participated in the organization of the International **Federation Ministerial Congress**, **herein to referred to as the Federation**, in October 1978, and who have actively participated in the **Federation International Ministerial Congress** sessions since its inception through November 2023. They are: United States and Canada, Mexico, Jamaica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Trinidad and Tobago, England, Philippines, and Australia.

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this organization shall be the Church of God (Seventh Day) International Federation, hereinafter referred to as the Federation.

The Federation is an association of conferences and councils united to achieve the Object stated in Article II.

ARTICLE II

Object

The object of the Federation shall be to coordinate the evangelistic effort of the Church at the international level and to promote doctrinal unity among its membership.

ARTICLE III

General Assembly

The highest authority within the Federation's organizational structure is its membership in session, which shall be called the General Assembly.

Each conference **or council** shall maintain independence and control over its own internal affairs.

ARTICLE IV

Membership

Section 1. Membership Qualification

Membership in the Federation shall be open to any church, association of churches, **or national conference or council** who agrees with the object, theology, and polity of the Federation as stated in these Bylaws.

Section 2. Members

~~Those conferences or councils who were charter members in 1978 and those granted membership in the Federation by majority vote of the Federation in session after 1978 and have remained active, and those granted membership in the Federation by a majority vote of the General Assembly in session starting in November 2023.~~

Membership in the Federation is granted to:

- A. Those conferences or councils who were charter members **of the International Ministerial Congress in 1978**; and
- B. Those **conferences or councils** granted membership in the Federation **International Ministerial Congress by majority vote of the Federation in session after 1978** and have remained active; and,
- C. Those **churches, association of churches, or national conferences** granted membership in the Federation by a majority vote of the General Assembly in session starting in November 2023.

Section 3. Issuance of Membership

Application for membership in the Federation shall be made to the Board of the Federation at least six months prior to the next session of the General Assembly. Upon determining that the applicant (1) understands the polity of the Federation, (2) will provide financial support for the Federation, and (3) understands and supports the theology of the Federation, the Board shall issue a Provisional Membership to the applicant entitling it to attend the next session of the General Assembly without the privilege of deliberation or voting. The Board shall present the Provisional Membership to the General Assembly with its recommendation that the Federation issue Full Membership to the Provisional Member by a majority vote. Provisional Membership expires in five years.

Section 4. Membership Review and Status

- A. Membership Review - The Board of the Federation shall make a quadrennial review of the membership status of each member of the Federation to determine who is active or inactive. A report of their findings shall be presented to the next General Assembly in session for its consideration.
- B. Active Member – Any church, association of churches, national conference or council that:
 - 1. Subscribes to, and advocates the theology contained in the Statement of Faith, Article XI, of these Bylaws and their interpretation as adopted by the Federation thus promoting the doctrinal unity of the Federation.
 - 2. Cooperates with the polity of the Federation by their attendance, regular international and national communication and annual financial support of the programs and missions of the Federation.
- C. Inactive Member - any church, association of churches, national conference or council whose membership status has been reduced by a majority vote of the General Assembly to that of a Provisional Member because of their failure to be:
 - 1. Diligent in attendance of General Assembly sessions.
 - 2. Active in communication with the international structure of the Federation.
 - 3. Willing to press toward doctrinal unity through the consideration of the Federation's Statement of Faith or its interpretation of the same.
 - 4. Supportive of the finances and the evangelistic mission of the Federation.
- D. At any time that a member is considered to have become inactive, it shall be the responsibility of the Board of the Federation to notify the member in question, in writing, that it is being considered as inactive for reasons set forth in paragraph C above. The member who has been so notified by the Board of the Federation of their apparent inactivity must be diligent to work with the Board of the Federation to correct their deficiencies. In the event that a member fails to correct its deficiencies, the Board, by a majority vote, shall recommend to the General Assembly that the membership in question be reduced to that of a Provisional Member.
- E. Reinstatement - An Inactive Member status, determined by the General Assembly in session, may be reinstated to Active Membership by a majority vote of the General Assembly in session.
- F. Removal – An Inactive Member may be removed by a majority vote of the General Assembly in session, by recommendation of the Board.

Section 5. Membership Zones

Membership of the Federation shall be organized into world zones as set forth in the Standing Rules.

Section 6. Deliberation and Voting

Each member of the Federation shall be entitled to one Representative Delegate who shall deliberate and vote in the quadrennial sessions of the General Assembly on behalf of their national churches(es). Board members of the Federation are ineligible to be selected as Representative Delegates. ~~Qualifications for additional non-voting delegates shall be set forth by the Federation in its Standing Rules.~~

ARTICLE V

Federation Leadership and Their Duties

Section 1. Federation Officers and Board

- A. The President shall preside over sessions of the General Assembly, its Board, and of the Executive Team; hold Board members and Executive Team responsible to carry out their assignments; and supervise Federation Representatives at the Zone level.
- B. The Secretary shall record the minutes for meetings of the General Assembly, its Board, and Executive Team; duplicate and distribute minutes to their respective memberships in a timely manner; make an annual report of the work of the Federation to the leadership of member conferences; notify members of the time, place, and agenda of the next General Assembly session, and distribute all necessary materials.
- C. The Treasurer shall keep a faithful record of all funds and properties of the Federation, receive and disburse funds at the direction of the Federation and/or its Board, and make reports of the same in a timely manner to the members of the Federation.
- D. There shall be four additional board members.
- E. They shall serve as a policy board and exercise all the authority of the Federation when the General Assembly is not in session, except to amend these bylaws.
- F. Deliberate and vote in the General Assembly.

Section 2. Executive Team

The Executive Team shall ensure implementation of the policies approved by the Federation Board and shall consist of the President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Executive Director (non-voting).

Section 3. Executive Director

- A. The Executive Director shall be appointed by the President in consultation with the Executive Team and the approval of the Federation Board **and the national conference to which he belongs**. He shall direct the daily operations of the Federation under the direction of the President.
- B. In consultation with the President and with the approval of the Executive Team, the Executive Director shall appoint and direct operations team members to support daily operations.

Section 4. Federation Representatives at the Zone Level

- A. The Federation **Zone** Representatives shall be appointed by the President in consultation with the Executive Team and with the approval of the Federation Board and the recommendation of the national conference to which he belongs. Under the President's direction, they shall represent and provide oversight for the Federation at the Zone level, liaising with the Presidents of each Conference within the Zone.
- B. This position is for 4 four years, and candidates may be reappointed. Appointments shall be made no later than 60 days from the end of the current General Assembly in session, and continue through to the end of the next General Assembly in session.
- C. Support assistants may be utilized within each zone to help implement the objectives of the Federation in collaboration with each Conference within the Zone.
- D. Zone support assistants shall be identified by the Representative to the Zone. The Representative shall submit candidates for each position to the Executive Director who shall appoint one of the two candidates in consultation with the President and approval of the Executive Team.
- E. Zone support assistants shall implement approved directives under the supervision of the Federation Representative at the Zone level.

Section 5. Federation Representatives at the Conference Level

- A. The President of each conference shall serve as the "Federation **Conference Representative**" in their respective conferences **and as primary delegate representing their respective conference at the General Assembly**. Should the President of the conference be **an officer** **a board member** of the Federation, the conference shall appoint **an alternate delegate** **a replacement** to represent the conference to the General Assembly. **Each member nation shall notify the Federation Executive Team of the replacement within 30 days after such an appointment is made.**
- B. The **Federation Conference** Representative shall utilize support assistants within their conference at each administrative level, ensuring that the objectives of the Federation are achieved, and is responsible for implementing a communication network between the Conference and its local churches.

- C. The conference or council of each member nation shall appoint alternate delegate(s). Each member nation shall notify the Federation Executive Team of the name(s) of all alternate delegate(s) within 30 days of such appointment.
- D. Alternate delegates have no vote and may not participate in debate unless designated to do so by the primary delegate or in the event of the incapacity of the primary delegate.

ARTICLE VI

Nominating Committee

Section 1. Selection

A Nominating Committee of four delegates shall be selected as follows:

- A. Two shall be elected by the General Assembly in session.
- B. Two shall be named by the Board of the Federation after they take office.
- C. Vacancies shall be by the appointment of the Board of the Federation.

Section 2. Term of Office

The Nominating Committee shall serve from the time of its selection until it reports to the next General Assembly in session and the election of the Board is held.

Section 3.

The Nominating Committee shall interview each nominee to:

- A. Acquaint the candidate with the duties of the office for which he is being nominated.
- B. Determine the candidate's interest and ability to serve the respective office and obtain his consent to serve if elected.

Section 4.

The Board shall communicate with the Nominating Committee at least six months before the meeting of the General Assembly.

ARTICLE VII

Election of the Board

Section 1. Election Procedure

The Board of the Federation shall be elected in the following manner:

- A. Candidates shall be limited to those offered by the Nominating Committee.
- B. The Nominating Committee shall offer a minimum of two candidates for each position.
- C. The Nominating Committee shall announce its initial slate of candidates to the Federation or General Assembly at least 24 hours prior to the election.
- D. The election shall be by ballot vote and shall take place only after the nominees have briefly expressed their vision and plans for the office to which they have been nominated.
- E. It is preferred that the Board represents different zones.
- F. A majority vote shall be required to elect each member of the Board.

Section 2. Term of Office

The term of office shall be four years. Terms shall begin at the close of the General Assembly session in which Board members are elected and shall continue through the next session of the General Assembly or until their successors are elected. Board members may succeed themselves.

Section 3. Filling a Vacancy

The Board may fill any vacancy that may occur on the Federation Board. The interim replacement of the President, Secretary or Treasurer may be appointed by the Board from among its members by a majority vote to serve until the next General Assembly. Vacancies that occur among remaining Board members may be filled by majority vote of the current Board from among the Federation membership.

ARTICLE VIII

Meetings

Section 1.

Regular meetings of the General Assembly shall be held every four years on even-numbered years. The time and place of the session shall be established by the Board of the Federation and announced one year in advance.

Section 2.

Electronic meetings may be held through electronic means, including but not limited to video conferencing, teleconferencing, or other remote communication methods, provided that all participants have access to the necessary technology. The General Assembly may be held through electronic means or by combination of in-person and electronic participants.

Section 3.

Special meetings of the General Assembly may be called by the Board of the Federation or by petition of member conferences or councils whose combined delegations constitute a quorum of two-thirds of the members. The time and place of a special meeting must be announced six months in advance of the meeting. Business conducted in special meetings shall be confined to that which is stated in the call. Business of an emergency nature not stated in the call may be considered by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly in session.

Section 4.

A majority of the delegates to the General Assembly shall constitute a quorum in all matters of business, except for amendments to Article XI which shall require a quorum of two-thirds of the delegates.

ARTICLE IX

Finances

Section 1.

- A. There is an expectation that each conference shall financially support the Federation. Each conference shall make a semi-annual contribution to the Federation. The Board of the Federation and each individual conference shall work together with the goal that each conference contribute at least 1.5% of the total contributions (tithes and undesignated offerings) it receives from its local churches and membership, taking into consideration the financial capacity of each national conference.
- B. Each conference shall collect a special offering at least one time each year for the international work of the church and send it to the Federation prior to the end of the calendar year.

Section 2.

The Executive Team of the Federation may request additional assistance from each conference to support victims of natural disasters or any other emergency.

Section 3.

The Executive Team shall prepare an annual budget and submit it to the Board for approval.

ARTICLE X

Communication

There shall be an effective communication network maintained within the Federation between its international, conference, and local church levels as set forth in the Standing Rules.

ARTICLE XI

Statement of Faith

Section 1. The Scriptures

We believe the Scriptures, contained within the Old and New Testaments, are inspired by God, inerrant in the original writing, and the only infallible rule by which human conduct and religious beliefs and practices should be determined.

Section 2. God, the Father

We believe in one God, the Eternal Spirit, and Creator, Preserver and Ruler of the universe, who is infinite in wisdom, holiness and love. By His own initiative God offers salvation to everyone and is worthy of our love, reverence, and obedience.

Section 3. Jesus, the Son

We believe in Jesus, the Messiah and Savior, only begotten Son of the Father, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of a virgin. We affirm His pre-existence, incarnation, sinless life, death as a substitutionary atonement, entombment for three full days and nights, bodily resurrection and ascension into heaven, present work as Mediator and High Priest and His personal, visible, imminent, premillennial return to rule on earth as Judge and King.

Section 4. The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit as the manifestation and power which proceeds from the Father and the Son to regenerate, sanctify, teach, guide and preserve all believers. Obedience to God and "fruit of the Spirit" are evidence of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life.

Section 5. Man and Sin

We believe that man was created sinless in the image of God. Through Adam's disobedience, man became a sinner by nature and by choice and thereby incurred sin's penalty, physical death and ultimately, if in an unsaved condition, eternal death (annihilation).

Section 6. Man and Death

We believe that physical death is a state of unconsciousness for all persons, righteous and wicked, a state which will remain unchanged until their resurrections. The righteous will receive eternal life and the wicked will suffer annihilation.

Section 7. Man and Salvation

We believe that man is saved from eternal death (annihilation) solely by the grace of God through faith, apart from human merit, works or ceremonies. Christ's death is given as payment for sins, and is offered to all who will accept it.

Section 8. The Church

We believe the Church of God, consisting of baptized believers who keep the faith of Jesus and the commandments of God, is of divine origin under the Lordship of Christ and exists universally and locally for the preaching of the gospel, for the nurture and fellowship of the believers and for service to the human race.

Section 9. Church Ordinances

We believe Christ prescribed two ordinances for the church which confirm faith in Him. 1) Baptism by immersion symbolizes the believer's death to sin and new birth in Christ. 2) Lord's Supper as an annual memorial of Christ's death symbolizes the believer's continued union with the Savior. Footwashing as an act of humility accompanies the Lord's Supper.

Section 10. The Ten Commandments

We believe the Ten Commandments, including the true seventh-day Sabbath, existing from creation and included in both the old and new covenant, constitute the basic code of conduct for all mankind. They are to be observed today, as an expression of one's love to God and fellowman.

Section 11. Christian Living

We believe the Christian, in keeping with his confession of faith in Christ, is called to a holy and godly life in thought, word and deed. This is exemplified in one's interaction with others, beginning in the home, which God established with the institution of marriage, and extending to the church and community. It is because a Christian has been redeemed, not in order to be redeemed, that he should: 1) reflect that his body is the "temple of the Holy Spirit" by his choice of entertainment, dress, conduct, personal habits and diet which includes eating only those meats designated by the Bible as "clean" for food. 2) respond to the physical and spiritual needs of humanity by relieving suffering, hunger, ignorance, loneliness and by witnessing for the gospel. Accordingly, a Christian's participation in warfare is contrary to his humanitarian calling. 3) serve God "in spirit and truth" by refraining from religious practices and celebrations which inter- mix Christianity with paganism. 4) support the church's mission by active involvement and financial stewardship of tithes and offerings. 5) maintain his relationship with God through prayer, fasting, Bible study, worship and obedience.

Section 12. Prophecy and Second Coming of Christ

We believe that Bible prophecy identifies certain religious, social, and political events and trends, including the rebirth of Israel, which precede and point to the imminent return of Christ, to establish His kingdom on earth, culminating in the eternal Kingdom of God. The fulfilment of Bible prophecy serves to strengthen the faith of the people of God.

ARTICLE XII

Publication of doctrines, practices, and policies

Each national conference or council may amplify and/or supplement Article XI by publishing and distributing its own listing of such doctrines, practices and policies as are needed to translate and facilitate the spirit and intent of Article XI into the particular culture and life-setting of its people.

ARTICLE XIII

Ministerial Guidelines

The Federation Board shall establish basic ministerial guidelines to be set forth in the Standing Rules.

ARTICLE XIV

Constitutional Guidelines

The Federation Board shall establish basic constitutional guidelines to assist member conferences to align with the Federation Bylaws. The guidelines shall be set forth in the Standing Rules.

ARTICLE XV

Mediation

The Federation shall provide conflict mediation for member conferences as set forth in the Standing Rules.

ARTICLE XVI

Committees

Section 1.

The Board of the Federation shall appoint an agenda committee. An outline of the program along with the subjects to be discussed during the session of the General Assembly shall be sent to the membership of the Federation at least six months prior to the session.

Section 2.

A Registration Committee of three shall be appointed by the Board of the Federation. The Registration Committee shall register and certify all delegates present and report on matters of a quorum to the General Assembly in session.

Section 3.

A Resolution Committee of five shall be appointed by the president and confirmed by the General Assembly. All business to be introduced to the General Assembly, including biblical studies, shall be submitted through this committee. Resolutions may originate with this committee.

Section 4.

- A. A Standing Committee on the Statement of Faith shall be appointed by the Federation President comprised of one minister from each charter member of the federation.
- B. The minister from each charter member shall be proposed to the Federation President by resolution adopted by the conference board of each charter member.

C. The assignment of the Standing Committee on the Statement of Faith shall be to:

1. Review all proposed amendment to Article XI (Statement of Faith) for compliance to the amending provisions of the federation bylaws;
2. Provide a recommendation for or against adoption to the General Assembly based on its analysis of all proposed amendments to the Statement of Faith;
3. The standing committee's recommendation shall be distributed to the federation delegates for the General Assembly no later than one year prior to the meeting of the General Assembly in which the proposed amendments is to be considered; and,
4. The standing committee may originate its own proposed amendments and accompanying study.

ARTICLE XVII

Parliamentary Authority

The current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall be the parliamentary authority for the Federation.

ARTICLE XVIII

Amendments

Section 1. Amendments to the Bylaws

These Bylaws, except Article XI, may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the General Assembly provided;

- A. The proposed amendment has been recommended to the Federation by a majority vote of the ministerial body of a member church, association of churches, national conference or council, or by the Board of the Federation.
- B. The wording of the proposed amendment had been distributed to the member churches of the Federation no less than two years prior to the meeting in which it is to be considered.
- C. It is adopted by a two-thirds vote.

Section 2. Amendment to the Statement of Faith

Amendments may be made to Article XI, Statement of Faith in a regular or special meeting of the General Assembly provided:

- A. The proposed amendment to the Statement of Faith is recommended to the Federation by a majority vote of the ministerial body of the member conferences or councils, association of churches, national conference or council or by the Board of the Federation.

- B. The wording of the proposed amendment accompanied by a Bible study in support of the amendment has been distributed to the member conferences or councils of the Federation two years prior to the meeting in which it is to be considered.
- C. It is adopted by a two-thirds vote.

Section 3. Interpretation of the Statement of Faith

An interpretation of any of the Statements of Faith contained in Article XI, may be considered in a regular or special meeting of the General Assembly provided:

- A. It has been recommended to the Federation by a majority vote of the ministerial body of a member church or by the Board of the Federation.
- B. The wording of the proposed interpretation accompanied by a Bible study in support of the interpretation has been distributed to member churches of the Federation two years prior to the meeting in which it is to be considered.
- C. It is adopted by a two-thirds vote.
- D. Statements of Faith that have been interpreted by the General Assembly in the future shall be marked with an asterisk and the interpretation shall be published as a Standing Rule in an Appendix to the Federation Bylaws.

Section 4. Amendments to the Standing Rules

The Standing Rules may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the General Assembly provided;

- A. The proposed amendment has been recommended to the Federation by a majority vote of the ministerial body of a member church, association of churches, national conference or council, or by the Board of the Federation.
- B. The wording of the proposed amendment has been distributed to the member churches of the Federation no less than three months prior to the meeting in which it is to be considered.
- C. It is adopted by a majority vote.