



# CHURCH OF GOD

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY Q&A

### 1. Who is part of the General Assembly?

The General Assembly of the Church of God in the United States and Canada (churches in both countries have, from the beginning of the Movement in the 1880s, seen themselves as united in one Assembly) is comprised of “professing Christians” who are “committed to living by the light of biblical revelation” and who also fall into one of the following categories: (a) ordained and licensed ministers in “good and regular standing with their relevant Church of God credentialing authorities,” (b) governing board members of all the Assembly’s “endorsed” and “affiliated” agencies (these are agencies that have signed Covenant Agreements with the Assembly), (c) officers of endorsed agencies who are ratified by the Assembly, (d) missionaries commissioned by Church of God Ministries, (e) members of the Assembly’s Ministries Council and Standing Committees, and (f) lay delegates “designated by their local church as representatives to the Assembly” (under a formula that essentially allows one lay delegate for every 100 people in weekend worship attendance, registered in the Church of God Yearbook on January 1 of each year). All these membership definitions may be found in Article 3 of the Assembly’s Constitution and Bylaws.

### 2. What is the purpose of the General Assembly?

The Assembly’s purpose is defined in Article 2 of its Constitution and Bylaws: *“The purpose of the Assembly shall be to further the ends of the Church of God: unity and holiness. As a people embracing Jesus as Lord, the Church of God strives to follow Him, as He defined His ministry in Luke 4:16–21, anointed by the Spirit to: proclaim, heal, free, and restore, while conscious of the risks and costs of so doing. The purpose of the Assembly shall also be to conduct the general business of the Church and to serve as a forum for the identification, selection, and empowerment of leaders for the Assembly and the ministries and agencies within the Assembly’s portfolio.”* This is important stuff. The Assembly can profoundly affect the course of events over time. There is no other forum in the Church of God that provides such sweeping access (every local church has a voice) and assignment (identifying a biblically-grounded, Movemental, ambition and call to action).

### 3. How often does the General Assembly meet?

The Assembly convenes in the odd-numbered years, in tandem with the Church of God Convention. The Assembly's meeting date and location are set by the Ministries Council.

### 4. Who runs the Assembly meeting?

The Assembly elects its own officers. The Assembly Chair presides over the meeting.

### 5. Who sets the agenda for the meeting?

The General Assembly's Executive Committee (comprised of the three elected Assembly officers and two elected members-at-large) sets the meeting agenda. Once the Committee agrees on the agenda, a copy will be posted online for all to see, and also distributed to all those registering for the Assembly meeting or requesting absentee ballots.

Some things are required on the agenda by the Constitution and Bylaws (for instance, reports from the Assembly chair and the general director at Church of God Ministries); the agenda also always includes a ballot for the election (and in some cases ratification) of key leaders (including Assembly officers, members of the Assembly's Standing Committees, the Ministries Council, and governing boards of endorsed church agencies, like our universities). Financial reports from Church of God Ministries (which is the legal expression—a nonprofit corporation—of the General Assembly) and a biennial budget.

### 6. Is it possible for anyone to place a motion on the Assembly floor? And, if so, how?

Yes and no. In other words, anyone who is a member of the Assembly may propose a motion for the Assembly to consider, but that motion cannot be brought to the floor directly. It must first pass through the Business, Leadership, and Resource Committee (BLRC)—a twelve-member elected Standing Committee of the Assembly. Once reviewed by the BLRC, the motion may be considered by the Assembly. Original motions-in-the-moment are not allowed on the Assembly floor.

If you would like to propose a motion for an Assembly to consider, you may submit it directly and electronically to the chair. For current officers, you may reach out to the general director's office by email at [EMiller@chog.org](mailto:EMiller@chog.org). You may also submit it in writing via the US Postal Service; just address the envelope to **Church of God Ministries, BLRC, PO Box 2420, Anderson, IN 46018. The BLRC asks that proposed motions be received or postmarked by June 1;** motions proposed at the time of the Assembly, will be immediately referred to the BLRC, without debate. These parameters are defined in Article 6.2 of the Constitution and Bylaws.

If you are a part of our Church of God family, but not a member of the Assembly, you may also propose a motion for the Assembly to consider, by following the same steps above. In cases of this kind, the BLRC may stand in your stead, owning the motion.

The only exception to this channel through the BLRC is one through the Ministries Council; the Council may also bring new business directly to the floor. Any Council motions being sent to this year's Assembly will be included in materials sent in May to all those pre-registering for the Assembly, and posted online.

## **7. How many people participate in the General Assembly?**

The number varies, year-by-year. Assembly participation experienced steep decline after the turn of the century; within the last decade, the Assembly's quorum was lowered from 400 to 300, because the original quorum of 400 could not be sustained during the meeting (undermining its ability to properly act). However, there has been a resurgence of interest in the last few years, with dramatic increases in attendance, with over 900 at the latest meeting.

## **8. Okay, so does it really matter? Isn't the meeting you've described predestined to be a sleeper, with people paper-shuffling and talking about boring stuff?**

No way. Of course, there are procedural moments that may give you pause to wonder. But the Assembly is that one place, just once every two years, where the leaders of the church come together to listen, learn, and speak into our future. It is substantive and influential. Much is always at stake.

The Assembly is not just a business meeting; it is a key part of the soul of the Church of God. It is a spiritual work. Some have approached it as a political event (organizing floor votes, lining up voices at the microphone to champion a particular point of view, and so on), but I have always seen it as a spiritual exercise, in which ideas are put forward, prayed over, and acted upon, as the Holy Spirit informs the Body. Motions should never be about winning or losing, but about discernment of the Spirit's leading. We believe, after all, that the Spirit speaks through the Body. That's the foundation of congregational theology; it is the grounding of the Assembly, as well.

Our dream is to have every church represented.