

OFFICIAL MANUAL  
OF THE  
CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST









**OFFICIAL MANUAL**  
**OF THE**  
**CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST**  
**SEVENTH EDITION**



**Revised 1957**

Published by the authorization and approval  
of Bishop C. H. Mason , Senior Bishop and  
Founder of the Church of God in Christ

This Discipline is subject to being revised  
annually by the General Assembly

**COMPILATION AND EDITORIAL**  
**COMMISSION**

Bishop Ozro T. Jones

Elder J. E. Bryant

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## PREFACE

To the members of the Church of God in Christ,  
Greetings:

It is our privilege and duty to again recommend to you this volume which contains the doctrine and discipline of the Church of God in Christ as has been revised, which we believe coincides with the Word of God.

This book grows out of years of experience. Evidently God's blessings have been with us and we have seen an unparalleled work extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the Gulf to the Great Lakes. Also, there have been planted successful missions in Africa and many of the isles of the sea. Now after a thorough examination of many published manuals, which are accessible to the clergymen, we found so much that was impractical and unscriptural, that after a prayerful consideration, we were driven back to God's Holy Word as the only sufficient rule of faith and practice for the Church of God. We have aimed to supply a practical want in a practical way. Whereas the Great God in heaven and earth has through his abundant mercy and great love for mankind given us Jesus Christ to be our Saviour and Redeemer, that we

might be reconciled to God through Him, we feel it our indispensable duty to follow the principles of the teachings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We consider Him our teacher and pattern. Therefore, since we have received this wonderful ministry, having obtained mercy, we take this method of setting forth what we understand to be a God accepted rule to govern the church. We hold the holy scriptures as contained in the Old and New Testaments as our rule of faith and practice in accordance with the principles of the Church of God in Christ, whose faith is founded upon the Apostles' doctrine as received on the day of Pentecost.

Many thousand people from other denominations and from families void of Christian teaching are gathering into our churches continually. Many of them come with little or no knowledge of the doctrine. Therefore, if they are to be useful in the Kingdom of God, they will need the instruction as to the doctrine of Christ.

Hence, this volume should be found in the home of every member of the Church of God in Christ. And more so, because it contains doctrines maintained and observed by the New Testament Church.

## HISTORY

In the year 1895, Elders C. P. Jones, C. H. Mason and others, while searching the scriptures, saw that they could not be saved without holiness. They were sanctified through the truth and began to preach this doctrine to their hearers. Because of such doctrine they were ejected from the Baptist Church. Later in that year those same brethren congregated themselves and were known to be the Church of God: Acts 20:28; I Cor. 1:2; 10:32; II Cor. 1:1; I Tim. 3:5-15. But because the truth of the gospel was being assailed on every side, and many false doctrines were being introduced by those who proclaimed the name but denied the power thereof; Elder C. H. Mason, being set forth to defend the Gospel, prayed earnestly for a name that would not depart from the scriptures and at the same time distinguish the true followers from the false. Therefore, in the year 1897 while walking along a certain street in Little Rock, Ark., the Lord revealed this name, "The Church of God in Christ", with the following scriptures to support it: I Thes. 2:14—"For ye brethren became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus; for ye have suffered like things of your own countrymen even as they have of the Jews"; II Thes. 1:1 — "Paul and Silvanus

and Timotheus unto the church of the Thes-salonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"; Gal. 1:22—"And was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ."

This union lasted until the year 1906, when a great revival was held in Los Angeles, Calif., under the auspices of Elder W. J. Seymour. Elder C. H. Mason, among many others, attended this revival and received the baptism of the Holy Ghost with signs of speaking with other tongues according to Act 2:4 — "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance."

He came back preaching this as a New Testament doctrine, to which many of the brethren were averse. In August, 1907, the general assembly convened at Jackson, Miss., with Elder C. P. Jones presiding as General Overseer, who was also averse to the so-called new doctrine promulgated by Elder C. H. Mason and others. After a very lengthy discussion, the assembly withdrew from C. H. Mason and all who promulgated the doctrine of speaking with tongues the right hand of fellowship.

Later in the same year, Elder C. H. Mason called a meeting in Memphis, Tenn., of all the ministers who believed in receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost according to the

scriptures Acts 2:4. Among the group of Elders who responded to this great call were E. R. Driver, J. .Bowe, R. R. Booker, W. M. Roberts, R. E. Hart, D. W. Welch, A. A. Blackwell, E. M. Page, R. H. I. Clark, D. J. Young, James Brewer, Daniel Spearman and J. H. Boone.

These brethren formed the first General Assembly of the Church of God in Christ, whose faith was founded upon the doctrine of the Apostles as received on the day of Pentecost. The Lord gave Elder C. H. Mason to be the Chief Apostle, to which the whole assembly accepted. Under his leadership the Church has witnessed a great triumph and growth.

In the year of 1933, five overseers were consecrated to the office of Bishop by the laying on of hands of Senior Bishop and assisted by the prayers of the Overseers and Elders and the General Convocation.

Those consecrated to the office of Bishop were namely, Bishop I. S. Stafford, Detroit, Mich.; Bishop E. M. Page, Dallas, Texas; Bishop W. M. Roberts, Chicago, 111.; Bishop O. T. Jones, Philadelphia, Pa., and Bishop R. F. Williams, Cleveland, Ohio.

**THE CONSTITUTION**  
**CERTIFIED COPY OF AMENDMENT**  
**TO CHARTER OF INCORPORATION OF**  
**THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST**

**STATE OF TENNESSEE**  
**Department of State**

I, JAMES H. CUMMINGS, Secretary of State of the State of Tennessee, do certify that the annexed is a true and correct copy of Amendment to Articles of Incorporation of CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST, which was recorded in this office on the 5th day of December, 1952, in Corporation Record Book, Volume P-37, at page 55, said amendment changing the powers of the corporation.

In witness whereof, I have hereto affixed my signature and the Great Seal of the State, at Nashville, this 23rd day of December in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred fifty-two.

JAMES H. CUMMINGS,  
Secretary of State

We, the ministers and members of the Church of God in Christ, who hold the Holy Scripture as contained in the Old and New Testaments as our rule of faith and practice, in accordance with the principles of our faith and government, do hereby amend and modify our By-Laws and Constitution, to wit: All former

Articles and Constitution shall be modified to read as follows:

(Article 1 — Change of Name)

That the Corporate name of this Corporation shall be "CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST," and that its headquarters shall be 928 South Fifth Street, Memphis, Tennessee.

(Article 2 — Senior Bishop)

Nothing in this Constitution shall operate to deprive Bishop C. H. Mason, 1121 Mississippi Ave., Memphis, Tennessee, the present Chief Apostle, Founder and Senior Bishop, of the authority he now holds as Chief Apostle of the Church of God in Christ.

(Article 3 — Local Churches)

The membership of the Local Church shall consist of all who have been set in order as a church by those authorized to do so, after having declared their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior, and their belief in our doctrines, and their willingness to submit to our government. Local churches may be set in order by the overseer having jurisdiction, or an Elder authorized by him.

(Article 4 — Organization of Churches)

When it seems clear to a State Overseer that a church set in order should not continue as such, it may be disorganized by him and his Board. In case a local church becomes disorganized, any such property that exists may in no way be diverted to other purposes, but shall pass to the control of the State Board for

the use of the Church at large as the State Board shall direct, and the Trustees holding such property for the disorganized church, shall sell or dispose of the same only on order, and under the direction of the appointed agent or the State Board and turn over such funds to said agent.

No Board of Trustees may divert property from the use of the Church of God in Christ, No Board of Trustees shall refuse the pulpit or the use of a local Church of God in Christ, for religious or other purposes to a duly authorized officer of the General Assembly  
of Churches)

No local church may withdraw as a body from the "Church of God in Christ" or in any way sever its relation thereto, except by provision of the General Assembly.

(Article 6 — Credentials of Delegates)

Secretaries of the several State Assemblies shall furnish certificates of elections of the delegates severally elected to the General Assembly, and shall also send a certificate of such election to the General Assembly, Secretary of the Church.

(Article 7 — The General Assembly)

The General Assembly is the only doctrine expressing, and law-making authority of the Church. The General Assembly shall be composed of a Chairman, Ordained Elders, Board of State Overseers, Board of Bishops, and such



lay delegation as the General Assembly may prescribe.

The General Assembly shall meet annually at the time and place designated by the Board of Bishops. The General Assembly shall elect by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, two or more Bishops who shall hold office during good behavior, and shall have general supervision of the Church, and who shall compose the Board of Bishops; provided, however, that Bishop C. H. Mason, the present Senior Bishop, shall retain his present power and authority during his life-time, but upon his death said authority shall revert to the Board of Bishops.

The General Assembly shall elect a General Board composed of ten members or more who shall be trustees in trust for the Corporation, and shall compose the Board of Home and Foreign Missions, Publications, Church Extension, Education and Ministerial Relief. Said Board shall transact all business affairs of the Church, and any other matters that may properly come before it, subject to the approval of the General Assembly, provided however, that all policies and plans of operation must have the approval of the Board of Bishops.-

Said Board shall be presided over by one of the Bishops. The General Assembly shall be presided over by the Bishops jointly and severally. The General Assembly shall elect its other officers and organize itself for the trans-

action of its business according to its wisdom and pleasure.

The General Assembly shall elect a General Secretary, who shall hold office during good behavior and who shall be the Secretary of the General Assembly, and the Board of Bishops. The General Assembly shall elect a General Treasurer, who shall hold office during good behavior. The General Assembly shall elect by lot from among the male elders of the Church as many Bishops as it may deem necessary, who shall hold office during good behavior, and who shall constitute the Board of Bishops, provided, however, that they shall be appointed by the present Senior Bishop during his life-time, but upon his decease, they shall be elected by the General Assembly, as provided in this Constitution.

(Article 8 — Extra Session of the  
General Assembly)

The Board of Bishops or a majority thereof shall have the power to call an extra session of the General Assembly in case of emergency, and to fix the time and place thereof.

(Article 9—Powers and Restrictions  
of the General Assembly)

The power and authority of the General Assembly to legalize for the Church, to make such rules and regulations over all the departments *as* it may deem best, is limited by the following restrictions:

(a) It shall not set aside or change any of our

articles of faith, nor shall it establish any new doctrines contrary to the doctrines that now exist in the church,

- (b) The General Assembly shall not abolish our representative form of government nor the General Superintendency, nor deprive it of any of the authority given it by this Constitution.
- (c) No person shall be seated in the General Assembly who has not been duly elected as a delegate or an alternate by a recognized State Assembly of the Church of God in Christ.

The General Assembly shall not deprive our ministers or members of a fair trial nor an appeal in case of conviction.

( Article 10—Rules or Order of the  
General Assembly)

The General Assembly shall adopt rules of order governing its manner of organization, procedure, committees, and all other matters pertaining to the conduct of its business. It shall be the judge of the elections qualifications of its own members.

(Article 11—Overseers of the  
Church of God in Christ)

The overseer will be appointed by the Senior Bishop and may be removed for cause, by the Senior Bishop or his appointee.

The overseers shall have general supervision of the Church of God in Christ, in their respective State. The overseers, jointly and sev-

erally shall appoint, ordain those who have been elected to be Elders. The Overseers may organize, re-organize local churches. The overseer presiding over the State Assembly, shall assign Pastors to the several charges within the bounds of his jurisdiction.

The Overseers may appoint District Superintendents over the several districts within their jurisdiction. The overseer presiding over the State Assembly shall decide all questions of order, subject to an appeal to the General Assembly, but all questions of law shall be decided by the General Assembly.

(Article 12—Board of Bishops)

The Bishops shall organize as a Board and shall arrange for an assignment to the members thereof, the work over which they shall have special jurisdiction. The Board of Bishops shall have supervision of all boards and the plans adopted by any Board must have the approval of the Board of Bishops.

The Board of Bishops shall constitute a Board to arrange courses of study for licensed ministers. The Board of Bishops shall have the power to do anything else in the service of the Church not otherwise provided for, according to their wisdom and in harmony with the Constitution of the Church.

(Article 13—Departments)

Women's Department

There will be a Women's Department in the General Assembly, State and Local.

There will be a National Supervisor or Mother working harmony with the National Board during good behavior, who will organize this department according to the rule and regulation of the general board of the General Assembly.

There will be a State Supervisor or Mother working in harmony with the State Overseer, and Board, during good behavior, who will organize this department according to the rules and regulation of the general board of the General Assembly.

There will be various auxiliaries in local churches, namely, Bible Band, Sewing Circle, Home and Foreign Mission, Purity Class, Sunshine Band, etc., under the supervision of women during good behavior, who will work in harmony with Pastor and said Church, and rules and regulations of said General Church. Sunday School Department

There will be a Sunday School Department for the training or enlightening of our children and adults in scriptural understanding.

There will be a National, State and Local Superintendent, who will hold office during good behavior, who also will organize the same, according to the rules and regulations of the General Board of the General Assembly. Department of Young People

There will be an auxiliary for the youth of our church, namely Young Peoples' Willing Workers.

There will be a National, State and Local President, who will hold office during good behavior, who will organize same according to the rules and regulations of the General Board of the General Assembly.

Department of Home and Foreign Mission

There will be a National President, Executive Secretary and Treasurer and Board of Directors, male and female.

These various departments will work according to rules and regulations of said General Church. Said National Officers to be appointed by Senior Bishop.

(Article 14—Trustees of Local Churches)

All Trustees of Local Church property shall be members of the "Church of God in Christ." In all cases where the law requires a special mode of election of Church trustees, that mode shall be strictly followed. Where no particular mode of election is required by law, the Trustees shall be elected by ballot at the annual meeting of the Church, or a meeting called for that purpose, announcement for such meeting having been given.

Before real estate is purchased for the use of the local church, the Trustees shall see that the church in all places where the law will permit is incorporated, and that the Articles of Incorporation shall provide that the local church be subject to the Government of the "Church of God in Christ," as from time to time authorized and declared by the General

Assembly of said Church, and that the business of the church shall be managed by a Board of Trustees elected and organized according to the provisions of said government. Such articles shall further provide that such corporation shall have power to acquire, hold, sell and convey property both real and personal. When this is done, all property acquired shall be deeded directly to the Church in its corporate name. It is required that all deeds conveying church property shall contain the following clause:

"In Trust that said premises shall be maintained and disposed of as a place of worship for the ministry and membership of "Church of God in Christ", subject to the doctrine, laws and usages of said Church as from time to time declared by the General Assembly of said Church."

In no case may the Trustees mortgage or encumber the real estate to meet the current expenses of the church, and they may in no case transfer the real estate of the church without the written consent of the church, and the written consent of the Overseer, having jurisdiction, for their faithfulness to their trust they shall be amenable to the local church to which they shall make annual report.

(Article 15—Trials)

Deacons of the Local Church shall be appointed and removed by the Pastor. Local churches may be tried and disorganized in the

manner as herein after set forth, when charged with any of the following offenses and found guilty:

Persistently violating the provisions of the law enacted by the General Assembly, or refusing to conform to the legal requirements of the constituted authorities of the Church.

Sustaining and supporting a Pastor who teaches doctrines contrary to the articles of Faith of our church. Sanctioning immoral practices by members and refusing to take legal steps prescribed by the constitution for the trial of persons charged with the commission of such offenses.

When any local church by official act or declaration or by non-performance of any of the official duties imposed upon it by the government of this church as found in our constitution, by-laws, shall offend in any of the foregoing particulars, any member of such church, with the consent of the Bishop having jurisdiction, may file a complaint with the State Board, charging that such church has committed one or more of the foregoing offenses; thereupon, the State Overseer may appoint a court of five Elders to summon witnesses, to hear evidence on behalf of the prosecution and the defense, and to render judgment in the case.

Twenty days before the trial of such church,



the time of which shall be fixed by the court, written notice shall be served upon the church board by the Church against which complaint is made; such notice shall give the time and place of such trial, and shall contain a correct copy of the complaint and other charges stated therein.

The Church so charged shall have the right to be represented by counsel at the trial, such counsel to be a member in good standing of the "Church of God in Christ." The State Board shall appoint an Elder of the Church to conduct the prosecution.

In case the Church so charged shall be found guilty by the court it shall be disorganized by the State Overseer and Board, unless it satisfies the members of the Board that it repents of its evil way, and will conform to the government and faith of our Church, and recognize the constituted authorities of the church.

All members of the churches convicted as above who repent or disclaim their guilt of the offenses for which said church may be disorganized, shall be entitled to letters in good standing by the Overseer and may unite with other churches of our faith and order.

Members of local churches shall be tried by the Pastor and the local church with the right to appeal to the State Board, whose decision shall be final. An ordained Elder shall be tried by the State Board with the right to appeal to the General Council. A State Super-

visor likewise shall have the same right of appeal.

#### The Eligibility of Elders

The certificate of credentials of an Elder are valid only as long as his life adorns the Gospel of Christ, and his teachings are in harmony with the Church of God in Christ. Any Elder, Evangelist or member acting as pastor of a church, who teaches contrary doctrines, or causes dissention, or in any way proves his inability as a Pastor, may be removed by a State Overseer of a General Board, and another appointed in his place.

All charges against an Elder shall be in writing, signed by his accuser or accusers. He shall be allowed counsel which counsel shall be a member of the "Church of God in Christ." Should the counsel be guilty of improper conduct, the court may refuse to hear him, and also punish him. In case the Elder so accused is found guilty by the unanimous judgment of the Court, after having been tried, according to the rules of evidence, judgment of the court shall be pronounced; such judgment may take the form of expulsion from the church and ministry, or that suspension for a limited time from his membership and ministry.

The trial of an Overseer will be the same as an Elder with the exception he shall be tried before the Board of Bishops with the right to an appeal to the General Assembly,

The trials of a bishop shall be that of an elder with these exceptions; He shall be tried before the General Counsel with the right of the General Assembly. All trials shall be held according to the following scriptures: Deut. 17:6; I Tim. 5:19; 2nd Cor. 13:1.

(Article 16—Local Ministers)

A member of a local church to be licensed to preach must first be recommended to the Overseer having jurisdiction, by his pastor and the church. Only an ordained minister may administer water baptism, or the ordinances of the church.

A licensed minister shall be tried by the pastor and church of which he is a member, with the right of appeal to the Overseer or State Board.

(Article 17)

We believe that governments are God-given institutions for the benefit of mankind. We admonish and exhort our members to honor magistrates, and the powers to be, and to respect and obey the civil laws.

We hereby and herewith declare our loyalty to the President and the Constitution of the United States, and pledge fidelity to the flag for which the Republic stands, but as God-fearing, peace-loving and law-abiding people, we claim only our inheritance as American citizens namely: to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience.

We believe that the shedding of human

blood, or the taking of human life, is contrary to the teachings of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and as a body, we are averse to war in all its forms.

We herewith offer our services to the President for any service that will not conflict with our conscientious scruples in this respect, with love to all, malice toward none, and due respect to all who differ with us on our interpretation of the Scriptures.

(Article 18—Amendments to the Constitution) The provisions of this Constitution may be altered or amended by two-third majority of all the members of the General Assembly, present and voting, with the exception of Sections a, b, and c of Article 9 of this Constitution. As soon as alterations or amendments shall have been adopted as herein before provided, the result of the vote shall be announced by the General Secretary, whereupon, such alterations or amendments shall have full force and effect.

**Approved: Elder C. H. Mason, Senior Bishop  
Overseer, U. E. Miller, Gen. Sec.**

We, the undersigned, comprising the Board of Directors of the Church of God in Christ, apply to the State of Tennessee, by virtue of the General Laws of our land, for an Amendment to said Charter of Incorporation,

**Bishop C. H. Mason, Senior Bishop**  
**Bishop A. B. McEwen**  
**Bishop J. S. Bailey**  
**Bishop O. M. Kelly**  
**Bishop O. T. Jones**  
**Elder J. O. Patterson**  
**Bishop S. M. Crouch**  
**Bishop Chas. Pleas**  
**Bishop V. M. Barker**  
**Bishop C. E. Bennett**  
**Bishop D. Bostick**  
**Overseer W. G. Shipman, Chairman**  
**Elder's Council**  
**Overseer A. M. Cohen, Treasurer**  
**Overseer U. E. Miller, Gen. Sec.**

State of Tennessee SS County of Shelby  
Personally appeared before me, N. W. Parham,  
Deputy Clerk of the County Court Of said  
County, the within named U. E. Miller, the  
bargainer, with whom I am personally ac-  
quainted, and who acknowledges that he ex-  
ecuted the within instrument for the purposes  
therein contained; and that the Said U. E.  
Miller, subscribing witness to the signatures  
subscribed to the annexed instrument being  
duly sworn, deposed and said that he is  
personally acquainted with the within named C.  
H. Mason, A. B. McEwen, J. S. Bailey, O. M.  
Kelly, S. M. Crouch, O. T. Jones, V. M, Barker,  
C. E. Bennett, D. Bostick, C. Pleas, W. G.  
Shipman, A. M. Cohen, and J O. Patterson,  
bargainers, and they acknowledged

same in his presence to be their act and deed for the purposes therein contained.

**John W. McGoldrick, County Clerk**

**By: N. W. Parham, Deputy Clerk**

Dated: 3rd day of December, 1952. I, JAMES H. CUMMINGS, Secretary of State, do hereby certify that this amendment to charter, with certificate attached, the foregoing of which is a true copy, was this day registered and certified to by me. This the 5th day of December, 1952.

**JOHN H. CUMMINGS**

**Secretary of State**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations were adopted by the General Council and approved by Bishop C. H. Mason.

Article 1. No one shall be permitted to serve on more than two Committees in one session of the National Convocation. That will depend upon conditions and the endorsement of the General Assembly of the Ministers, Bishops, and the approval of the Senior Bishop.

Article II. No one will be permitted to hold more than two National Offices at any one time. That will depend upon conditions, endorsements of the General Assembly of Bishops, Overseers, Pastors and approval of the Senior Bishop.

Article III. No overseer shall preside over more than One State, and pastor more than one church at the same time, where there are ten or more churches in

said State. That will depend upon the condition of the case and the approval of the Senior Bishop and his appointment.

Article VI. The State Convocations do reserve the right to protest against any assessments levied upon them within the states which are in excess of the regular current assessments or not pertinent to the District, State or National Work.

Article V. That our National monies be budgeted in percentage form, according to numerical strength and the conditions of the State, to meet the needs of the General Church.

Article VI. That all pastors will pay their tithes to Bishop Mason, according to the Scriptures.

Article VII. An Auditing Committee shall audit the books of the National Treasurer and all Departments and make a written report of their findings. A copy to be supplied each member of the General Council.

Article VIII. That all monies, whether solicited or budgeted for National purposes shall be reported and centralized into the National Work.

Article IX. No assessment shall be assigned from any Department of the General Church, without the approval of the General Council of Bishops, Overseers and Ministers with endorsement of Senior Bishop.

Article X. Resolved that whereas it is necessary to have and to participate with the Women and their Department, it is necessary also to seek a better understanding. Resolved that all monies raised in the Department or Auxiliaries under the jurisdiction of the Women's Department will make prompt and adequate reports to our General Assembly of Bishops, Overseers

And Ministers, and that the Auditors will have access to investigate and to make proper inventory and to scrutinize all reports, records and papers pertaining to the National Church Work of the Church of God in Christ.

**U. E. Miller, Secretary**