

CHURCHRIGHT

DOING CHURCH RIGHT

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Annual IMC Sabbath Worldwide

Sabbath,
November 4, 2017

Join CoG7 congregations worldwide as they celebrate God's work through our International Ministerial Congress (IMC). A special offering will be raised to support global evangelistic outreach, emerging conferences, and leadership training for the coming year. Details will be sent through local leaders, or request them from gcmissions@cog7.org.

Reflections on Convention 2017

Our convention is past, but my mind and heart are still full as I reflect on the week. I think the highlight of the week was our passionate worship. Gordon Kuryluk and Dennis Mease organized a worship team and services that lifted us to heavenly realms. Worthy is the Lamb!

I'm also thinking of our many volunteers, without whom conventions would be impossible. Space hardly allows me to name all the teams, committees, and functions, let alone the people who served on them: worship and speakers; registration and voting devices; translation; audio, visual, and technology; ushers; children's, teen, and young adult programs; senior adults; special meals hosts; Program and Bylaws Revision Committees; and finances. Team members and others worked sacrificially to give the rest of us a fantastic 2017 Convention experience.

I am particularly gratified to report that the hotel staff members with whom I often spoke are eager for us to return. Except for one or two instances, those who served us throughout our convention felt respected and well treated by us. We left them with a good impression of Christ and of our church. Little could be more important!

Many of us went to this convention concerned that we might, for a second convention in a row, fail to complete the bylaws revision process. I'm thankful to God, to our cooperative members, and to Chairman Samuel Holland that we completed the process. Revised General Conference bylaws were adopted and, during our 2019 convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico, we will return to our normal program, which includes uplifting and helpful seminars and workshops.

A personal concern grew even greater at this convention. We must find a way to give all our adult members a voice in General Conference decisions. This year, about 400 voting members in attendance made major decisions that will affect thousands of members who were not there to discuss and vote. Members without a voice feel disconnected. We must find a way to include everyone! Our unity depends on it.

Springfield, Illinois, and Convention 2017 are past. Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Convention 2019, here we come!

— Loren Stacy



District News

West Coast



WCD Women's Ministry Committee members (L to R): Martha Ling, Jennifer Stucker, Kamin Sandford, Ivonne Vega, and Angeles Urban.

Last February, our committee met to plan effective ministry to women in our local churches that will lead us toward deeper spiritual growth, strengthen discipleship, and build stronger personal relationships with each other. Efforts are underway to develop a Women's Mentoring Ministry throughout the district.

Our committee, along with members from the Marion church, attended our first Mentoring Training Event, facilitated by Jacque Rudolph and Barbara Burrell. They have developed in-house training manuals for both mentors and mentees and resource support documents for Marion's Mentoring Ministry. Based upon this church's experience, the district may decide to partner with Marion to create district materials.

If your church is interested in starting a Women's Mentoring Ministry, contact Jennifer Stucker at jenstucker@msn.com for more information. A support team and resources are available to help you get started!

— Jennifer Stucker

Men's Retreat. One hundred forty men gathered May 26-28 in Oakhurst, CA, for the third consecutive year.

Studying the theme "A Faithful Man" (Proverbs 20:6), they learned about men's biblical



responsibilities in their households. Many brothers expressed their excitement to return in 2018. For more information, please contact Ruben Frausto (916-832-4982; ruben308@yahoo.com) or Larry Zaragoza.

Southeast



Forty youth leaders from this district met in Oldsmar, FL, April 28-30, to plan their annual youth and young adult retreat, to be held in Parrish, FL, December 22-24. The theme this year is Y2Y (Youth to Youth). All programs, events, and speakers will be from various youth groups throughout the entire district. Approximately 200 teens and young adults are expected to attend.

Southwest



Using the theme "Desiring God," the 2017 Dover Family Camp (June 11-17) motivated the church to determine if there is a vibrant desire to serve the Lord personally and corporately. Superintendent Chip Hinds was among the speakers, and family and friends enjoyed worship, activities, and fellowship. Dover Family Camp has existed since 1958, and continues to change the lives of many Church families in the district.



On June 24, R.E.A.L. girls held their conference in San Antonio, TX. Middle and high school girls enjoyed speakers, activities, and fellowship in the New Hope United Church.

Central



On May 6, Elder Miguel Gonzalez, pastor of the Elgin-Chicago church, was ordained with ministerial license. Superintendent Ken Lawson (right) and Elder Tim Endecott performed the ordination.

Ken Lawson (left) and Pedro Saenz, pastor at Damen-Chicago, pray a blessing on the leadership team at the district's newest congregation in Plainfield, WI. The local leader is Miguel Uruga.



For more photos and reports, visit churchright.org.

SPRING VALE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL



President Loren Stacy presents General Conference awards to Mark Nienhuis (left) and Dannielle Endecott during Spring Vale's graduation weekend, May 27-29.



Don't forget to visit our online Memorials page at cog7.org.



CALENDAR 2017

- August 2-6** - Dakota Youth Retreat, Crystal Springs Bible Camp, Medina, ND
- August 18-20** - Dakota Family Camp, Lake Poinsett, SD
- September 1-4** - 30th Annual Hispanic Women's Retreat, Sandy Cove Ministries, North East, MD
- September 12-17** - Senior Adult Retreat, Sis-Q Meadows Camp, Cave Junction, OR
- September 14-17** - SWD Senior Camp, Camp Cimarron
- September 15-18** - SWORD Retreat, Sky Camp (in Cascade foothills east of Dexter, OR)
- September 30 - October 1** - Dallas-Fort Worth Super Sabbath and Leadership Meeting
- October 20-22** - Octoberfest Family Camp, Jasper, AR
- October 27-29** - Southwest Women's Retreat, Lakeview Camp, Waxahachie, TX

Artios Calendar Events

- September 10** - Early fall course registration ends
- September 17 - October 22** - Early fall classes in session

For a complete listing of events, please visit churchright.org.



December 17-27
Pioneer Missionary Training, Mexico City, Mexico; missions training in evangelism and discipleship for young adults, pastors, leaders.



Conference Board of Directors Post-Convention Meeting

The newly elected Conference board held its first meeting in Springfield, Illinois, on July 9, 2017. The meeting opened with the board spending time in prayer asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. It welcomed two new members: Daniel Flores Jr. and Reuben Zaragoza.

The following officers were elected/appointed for a two-year period, July 2017 to July 2019:

Chairman – Samuel Holland

Vice-Chairman – Dennis O'Banion

Secretary – Hope Dais

Treasurer – Greg Lincoln

The chairman led the board through a section of its Policy Manual, which outlines the responsibilities of a policy board. Conference accountant Dawn Wayman joined the meeting to review the audit report and answer questions from board members.

The following members were elected to the Nominating Committee: Whaid Rose and Brian Larson. This committee will prepare the slate of nominees for the election of four positions to the Conference board during the 2019 convention. Board members coming to the end of their term in 2019 will be Brad Ciavarella, Dennis O'Banion, Manuel Salazar, and Larry Zaragoza.

Conference President Loren Stacy reviewed several items with the board and thanked the board members for the opportunity to serve.

The board appointed the following members to the Human Resources Advisory Committee: Samuel Holland, Mark Caswell, and Joshua Gutierrez. This committee assists the Conference president regarding human resources law, in addition to providing advice with respect to his role supervising administrative employees and appointees of the Conference board.

The following Conference members were appointed to the Literature Committee: Jason Overman (chair), Calvin Burrell, John Marlin, Monico Muffley, and Whaid Rose.

— Samuel Holland, Chairman
Conference Board of Directors

Convention Finances

We do not include our Biennial Conventions in the General Conference budgets. Rather, we do everything we can to make them financially self-supporting. This is much more difficult than you may think.

Our conventions have grown to the point that we must seek major hotels and convention centers as our venues. It's a daunting task to find places with the rooms and services we require, in locations that favor our members, and at a price everyone can afford.

Further complicating matters, we must sign contracts far in advance of our conventions. This requires us to make educated guesses about how many of our members will attend, how many will stay at the convention hotel(s) and for how many nights, how many will eat the group meals provided at the hotel(s), and so on. All of this and more go into calculating the final costs our members are charged and the final contracts the General Conference must sign. If we fall short of any of these contract requirements, the Conference must pay the difference.

This is the reason for facility fees and continual pleas that members stay at the convention hotel(s), eat the group meals, and give generous offerings throughout convention week. We're trying to cover expenses and break even. We understand that many must do otherwise; they can't afford to come to convention any other way. But if you can afford to sacrifice financially for your church, please stay at the convention hotel(s) and buy tickets for the hotel meals. Thanks!

— Loren Stacy

Bylaws Revision Committee Report

At the 2015 convention, our committee was reappointed to bring the proposed bylaw revision to Convention 2017 for consideration. After a week of deliberations and amendments to the proposal, the revised bylaws were adopted!

We believe adopting these revised bylaws represents an important step forward in our journey as a church. The new bylaws provide better legal protections for our members and congregations. They also serve to increase our unity and teamwork as one church in pursuit of God's vision. Thanks to God for His direction throughout

Don't Miss Convention 2017 on YouTube!

In addition to the complete bylaws and reports on cog7.org, a number of video excerpts from convention are available on YouTube. Visit churchright.org for a link to access them.

this process. Thanks to the Bylaws Revision Committee for their excellent work. And thanks to the members of the General Conference for working together to move forward.

— Israel Steinmetz



Highlights of the 2017 Newly Adopted Conference Bylaws

The General Conference adopted new bylaws during its business session in Springfield, Illinois. These come into effect immediately, with three transitional provisions:

- District superintendents may no longer serve on the Conference board of directors. Their role has been expanded in these new bylaws. Superintendents who currently serve on the Conference board may serve until the next convention.
- Districts boards have been redefined under these new bylaws, and how they are to function as administrative entities within the Conference has been clarified. Districts have three years to update their procedures to comply with the newly adopted bylaws.
- *Congregations* have been clearly defined within these new bylaws as either “local churches” or “missions.” Churches no longer receive their designation based on the number of members but rather on how they organize their boards. What was previously referred to as a *Sabbath school* is now called a *mission*. *Congregations* (the collective term for both *local churches* and *missions*) have three years to update their local bylaws to comply with the newly adopted bylaws.

Here are just a few of the highlights on the newly adopted bylaws:

- Changes in the bylaws are intended to offer better protection to our conference and affiliated congregations that conform to the requirements set out in the document. This is achieved by the inclusion of a Preamble that states the priority of the spiritual church body (ecclesiastical entity) over any corporation a local church may form (civil entities). Additionally, the General Norms state the supremacy of God’s Word (Scripture) over the laws of man (civil law). Finally,

Women

The Women’s Ministry lunch on Friday drew 91 women from all over the US and Canada. They joined in a bracelet exchange so they could go home having met at least one new sister at convention.

In keeping with CoG7’s TVR theme, we also reminded the women to “bloom where planted” because we all can do something to help spread the love and mercy of Jesus Christ. Favors of garden gloves and seed packets reminded them of what they have been enabled to do to share Jesus!

With your offerings, purchases, and donations, women at convention raised enough funds to purchase sixteen sewing machines (\$1,643) for our sisters in Pakistan. Brother Bryan Cleeton, director of G. C. Missions Ministries, will ensure that these are purchased so that the women become self-sufficient in helping their families and local churches. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for making this possible!

— Esther Winchell



Barbara Fischer (left) made a quilt to raise money for missions. Pictured with her is Lisa Pedraza.



Young adults enjoyed fellowship with new and old friends at convention. On Thursday evening they gathered for the special Black & White Gala.



Elder Robert Coulter shares memories with fellow seniors at the G. C. Convention.

Seniors

“Memories and Dreams” was the theme of the Senior Afterglow, hosted by Sandra and Ken Lawson. About 80 seniors attended.

We worshipped the Lamb who is worthy and enjoyed lots of laughter at “cute” things our grandchildren have said. We listed over 50 names of pastors who touched our lives and are now asleep, awaiting the resurrection.

Elder Robert Coulter (age 86) remembered what the Church was like when he started in the ministry about 60 years ago. Our newest and youngest pastor, Elder Jonathan Hicks, shared what he dreams the Church will be when he is Robert’s age. His “Have No Regrets” spurred us on to speak to those in difficult circumstances and lead them to Jesus as the perfect solution for the future church and for eternity.

Cassie Schlenker closed our evening by singing “The Lord’s Prayer.” (For a more detailed report, see the next issue of the *Afterglow*.)

— Ken Lawson



Under the direction of Gordon Kuryluk and Denny Mease, the worship team provided uplifting music each evening.

we declare we will obey God rather than man by stating the following: “Civil law will be given effect so long as it is not inconsistent with the Scriptures, the Statement of Faith, or these bylaws.”

- Affiliated congregations may no longer offer dual memberships. “Membership, including voting privileges . . . is limited to individuals who are members of the Conference” (Article III, Section 3).

The role of district superintendents has been expanded as follows:

- They issue membership to members-at-large. Members-at-large are those individuals who cannot participate in a local congregation due to proximity, or who have the permission of their local board and district superintendent. In either case, members-at-large must support and participate in the programs of the Conference (Article III, Section 4).
- District superintendents are responsible to notify the Conference office when a congregation qualifies as a local church (Article VIII, Section 1).
- They must give prior approval to local bylaws before their adoption.
- They are responsible to notify the Conference office when a congregation qualifies as a mission (Article VIII, Section 2).
- They may appoint mission leaders (Article VIII, Section 2).
- They arbitrate any internal disputes in a local church or mission (Article VIII, Section 3).
- They have all authority over district affairs not explicitly assigned to district boards (Article IX, Section 3).
- Members may appeal the discipline decisions of their local church or of the district board (for members-at-large) to a Standing Appeals Committee established in each district (Article III, Section 5).

The Conference board is responsible to

- authoritatively interpret the bylaws;
- employ the Conference president and other administrative personnel;
- establish districts, appoint district superintendents (after consultation with district boards regarding possible candidates) to supervise districts;
- appoint Ministry Directors to administer ministries (Article IV, Section 4);
- review district policies.

Employees of the Conference may no longer serve on the Nominating Committee (Article IV, Section 5).

The positions of Conference secretary or Conference treasurer may be appointed from the membership of the Conference (they need not be Conference board members, Article V, Section 2).

Reports of the Conference board and Ministerial Coun-

cil are now included in the agenda for each business session at convention (Article VI, Section 5).

- A local congregation is designated as a
- *local church*: must have a minimum of two elders to provide oversight and serve on a church board. The pastor will count as one of these elders (Article VIII, Section 1).
- *mission*: any congregation unable to form a board of at least three, with two being elders (Article VIII, Section 2).

The following roles are outlined for a *local church*:
Pastor (Ministerial License or Ministerial Credentials, Article VIII, Section 1)

Local Pastor
Local Leader
Elder
Deacon
Church Board
Nominating Committee

- District boards are responsible to
- determine the status of a congregation to be a local church or mission. Determinations may be appealed to the Conference board;
 - assist the district superintendent in leading the district consistent with its assignment and the directions of the Conference president (Article IX, Section 4);
 - establish procedures for electing board members.

District boards may be comprised of at least three members in addition to the district superintendent. At least one member of the district board must be a minister. All members may be ministers.

The following role is outlined for a mission:
Mission Leader

Only the “fair share” financial plan is now available for participation in the financial policy of the Conference.

Bylaw amendments must be submitted 120 days prior to convention, and notice to members must be made at least 60 days prior to convention (Article XIII, Section 2).

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Youth

Students from all around the country gathered during convention week to take a deeper look at and gain a better understanding of why Jesus is worthy of our love, devotion, and worship. The program consisted of small groups led by youth workers from Texas, Oregon, Michigan, Arkansas, and South Dakota. Pastors Joshua Gutierrez (El Paso, Texas - Tree of Life), Michael Mancha (Eugene, Oregon), Tim Hinds (Kansas City, Kansas), and Jason Overman (Jasper, Arkansas) shared personal stories and gave biblical perspectives challenging students to look deeply into Scripture and reflect on their personal relationship with Jesus.

At the special Wednesday evening service, Josh Cummings (Conroe, Texas) spoke about Jesus being our sacrificial Lamb. At the conclusion, students had a special time worshipping together and opportunity to pray with youth workers and pastors.

In addition to recreation time and special outings, students connected with old friends and made new ones. Seeing them respond was a wonderful experience that we will forever be grateful to be a part of.

— Jason and Rose Rodriguez



Sabbath morning, a new generation of children performed in an ancient Egyptian-themed play.



At Convention 2017, 22 of 48 graduates from Artios Christian College walked the stage in recognition of their commitment to being equipped for leadership. Hundreds more were inspired to pursue leadership training through the college's focused, flexible, and financially sustainable courses and programs. Artios is committed to equipping leaders for a vibrant 21st century church!

Publications

Since the 2015 Convention, the Bible Advocate Press has produced and distributed almost half a million pieces of literature and sent them to over 80 nations. Our website (baonline.org) has attracted thousands of visitors from over 160 nations worldwide.

Pray for the BAP as it supports the Church of God, sharing the grace and truth of Jesus Christ around the globe.

