



# *Harvest* **COMMISSION** **2024**

**LABORERS TOGETHER FOR GREAT COMMISSION COMPLETION**



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## Church of God International Executive Committee

# Harvest COMMISSION 2024

LABORERS TOGETHER FOR GREAT COMMISSION COMPLETION

## *Introduction*

We are rapidly approaching the 2,000th birthday of the modern church, established after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We continue to follow the dictates of the Great Commission to go into all nations, teaching them about the grace and mercy of our Savior, and baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Much time has passed and little time remains for us to FINISH and fully carry out the COMMISSION given to the church. Thus, **Harvest Commission 2024.**

For our movement to participate in this commandment, the Church of God must swiftly ADVANCE our efforts with an evangelistic fervor. We must ACTIVATE every person and every resource available to us. And if we do so, we will ACHIEVE a great HARVEST in the latter-day revival that lies ahead.

The Church of God - a Pentecostal movement birthed out of a desire to reach the lost and see them filled with the incredible power of the Holy Spirit - is poised to ADVANCE, ACTIVATE, and ACHIEVE a great end-time HARVEST.

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# Harvest COMMISSION 2024

These are unprecedented times! During the past decade, the world has experienced political upheaval, re-definition of marriage, inauguration of profitable social media, catastrophic occurrences, epidemics, racial and social division, significant shifts in values, massive migration, exponential technological developments, volatile economic trends, global COVID-19 pandemic and quarantine shutdowns, vaccines, and, believe it or not, more.

The church has also experienced change. As a result of global trends, the Church of God experienced postponement of a General Assembly, established new meaning to virtual church, lost many leaders, ministers and laity to the pandemic, and threats to religious liberty. However, throughout all of the global societal contractions, the Church of God has maintained its razor-sharp focus on fulfilling and finishing the Great Commission and has reported more than five million conversions since 2012.

In a politically correct world, the Church of God has affirmed its doctrinal beliefs, actualized its overarching vision as a movement, assimilated and mobilized an army of ministers and leaders to march into the harvest together, and aggressively accelerated our efforts to finish the Great Commission. Throughout the past six years, the International Executive Committee has been focused on setting the pace with the vision of the Church of God being a relevant Pentecostal movement, alive and well, synergistic, and sensitive to the signs of the times.

## FINISH COMMISSION

In 2014, God impressed on my heart, “Bring to the attention of the Church of God, that this movement can be, should be, and must be a leading participant in finishing the Great Commission.” The first phase was initiated with attention upon the FINISH Challenge, acknowledging that with the power of the Holy Spirit, the Church of God as a Pentecostal movement could witness the realization of the Great Commission.

In 2016, I came to the office of General Overseer and the FINISH Commitment was adopted, not as a short-term emphasis, but an ongoing focus. This commitment flows out of initiative core values—an acrostic of the word “FINISH”. The Church of God must—**F**ind the lost; **I**ntercede on their behalf; **N**etwork with other believers; **I**nvest resources; **S**end laborers into the field; and reap a world **H**arvest. This was to become an official ministry initiative identified as the FINISH Commitment. During the Wittenberg Congress at the graveside in Castle Church of Martin Luther, founder of the Protestant Reformation, hundreds of key denominational leaders adopted the FINISH Commitment as I presented the FINISH Declaration as a global church commitment.

The Church of God acknowledged the FINISH Challenge, accepted the FINISH Commitment, and now, as the church focuses upon the 2022-2024 General Assembly period—moving forward the church will actively engage Harvest

# LABORERS TOGETHER FOR GREAT COMMISSION COMPLETION

Commission 2024—reaping the Harvest.  
The Church of God must—

- **FIND** Commission its seven million constituents to find the lost;
- **INTERCEDE** Commission the body of Christ to engage in a global prayer movement;
- **NETWORK** Commission the networking of leaders, pastors, ministers, laity and local churches;
- **INVEST** Commission the resources to fulfill the task;
- **SEND** Commission and send God-called disciples sharing the gospel in the Spirit and Power of Pentecost; and
- **HARVEST** Commission a global missional force to maximize the HARVEST!

## IMPERATIVES OF HARVEST COMMISSION 2024

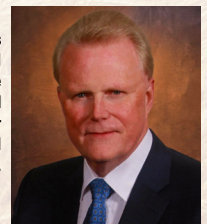
As we concentrate upon the HARVEST '24 initiative, the Church of God must intensify its commitment to be a compelling living body of Pentecostal believers, united cohesively and commissioned to engage the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Every Church of God person around the world, synergized as a movement, becomes a missional force to advance the Kingdom of God and witness the Great Commission Finish!

What will finishing the Great Commission look like? First, we need a synergized and mobilized church. We must move past ego and logo and arrive at “we go.” Only then is the Great Commission within our reach. What got us *here* will not get us *there*. It is possible to respect one another’s Christian identity and obey our Lord’s final command to take the gospel to every ethnic group. All of us have a role in the goal and a part in God’s heart!

Secondly, we need to be a global center of spiritual gravity, a central means of communications and connectivity, for churches in every nation to synergize the best relationships, systematize the best training and resources, strategize for unreached peoples and scripturalize the message of Christ. Presently, Church of God has membership of more than 7.7 million and is represented in 187 countries. We will be on track to have a presence in all nations of the world by 2030. Our vision is for each national ministry to be multipliable and unite the best-qualified leaders in every nation, teaching, resourcing and launching world-class missional strategies.

Thirdly, we need a harvest of thousands of equipped and commissioned leaders. This includes a transgenerational army of kingdom-minded and Christ-centered dedicated and commissioned leaders willing to

Tim Hill serves as general overseer of the Church of God and is the author of the FINISH Commitment.





*"Here is the bottom-line imperative: if we accept the charge, we must commission the missional force to go—it's that simple."*

go into the hardest places of the world with the gospel. Fulfilling the Great Commission is not about money; it is about motivation. It's not about competing but completing. We have money, people, time, talent and resources in the kingdom of God. FINISH is about taking the Gospel to every continent, every nation, city, town, village, and obscure places of the earth. There must be an all-out effort to mobilize a generation of young men and women commissioned into full-time ministry who will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with their ministry colleagues accepting the commandment of Christ "to go into all the world."

Fourthly, we need to commission the missional force to go—it's that simple. Each of the four Gospels describes Jesus commissioning His disciples. They were to proclaim the Gospel to the entire world (Mark 16:15); proclaim repentance for forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47); and were sent by Jesus with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit (John 20:21-22). The Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20 is Jesus' final charge to His disciples. This passage contains a declaration ("All power is given unto me..."), a command ("Go ye..."), and a promise ("I am with you always..."). The

paradigm of Jesus' charge is the act of commissioning. At its core, the Great Commission is a commission, a task, and a mission with the central task to go and win the lost, teach them and mobilize them to obey Christ's commands.

Commissioning is the act of granting authority to someone. It is to charge someone with a task and provide the authority to fulfill the command. As we fix our attention with laser intensity upon a Great Commission finish, let us commission global leaders, pastors, ministers, laity, local churches, states, regions, and nations, implementing the dedication and act of commissioning as we engage in finishing the mission of the Great Commission.

## **OBJECTIVES OF HARVEST COMMISSION 2024—THE PRIORITY OF HARVEST**

During the coming General Assembly period, here are the objectives to launch Harvest Commission '24.

### **Advance the Coverage of the Gospel**

- Global Gospel Coverage! Renew the focus of the Church of God on being "A Spirit-Empowered

Church Fulfilling the Great Commission" while releasing every leadership dimension "to go" and actively engage the Harvest with the prayer and goal of "Covering the Earth with the Gospel" by 2030—A Bible, A Believer and a Local Church Body in every nation.

- Enlarge the National and Global Harvest Footprint of the Church of God in cities, counties, and countries with 1,000 new churches throughout the world. We will embrace a renewed call to the priority of Evangelism through intentional and organic church planting by initiating state/regional and district church planting initiatives.

### **Activate the Calling of a Generation**

- Engage, prepare and credential another generation of 5,000 ministers ages 17-29 throughout the world with a goal of 1,000 in North America.
- Invest in leadership development at all levels of the church through more accessible paths of learning opportunity and ministry preparation.
- Know and Love Your Church!



Encourage Church of God laity and ministers to prepare and actively participate in every level of church functions, including participation in the 79th General Assembly in Indianapolis, Indiana.

#### **Achieve the Continuity of Significant Growth**

- Mobilize the fiduciary responsibilities of the International Offices by retiring debt on existing facilities that has been a twenty year process; and further, accelerate the fulfilment of other obligations, thereby releasing resources to help fund the Harvest perpetually.
- Launch regional renewal through the attained and combined objectives of Community Evangelism and Benevolence, Personal Discipleship, World Missions Participation, Student Engagement, and Spiritual Renewal birthed by a return to daily Bible reading, consistent prayer, and a lifestyle of Christian witness.

### **HARVEST 2030**

At Pentecost, we celebrate the birth of the Christian Church. On the Day of Pentecost, those in the Upper Room were all in one accord, if you will, synergized, in expectation of Jesus' command to go and tarry until you are endued with power on high. Suddenly, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them and they "began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them the utterance." (Acts 2:4) As is recorded in Acts 2, the witness of the Holy Spirit was to impact the many nations represented in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost. On that day, the message of Peter was heard, "gladly received," and there were "about three thousand souls" added to the church. That day was the birthday of the church.

As we approach the 2,000th birthday of the church in 2030, can we run with all that is within us to the finish line witnessing the Great Commission Finish? I believe we can and we will!

### **GREAT COMMISSION HARVEST**

Matthew 9:37-38 tells us, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest field." A synergistic, commissioned church is a compelling body of Pentecostal believers united cohesively together to engage the fulfillment of the Great Commission. We have acknowledged the challenge, accepted the commitment, and now we must commission a missional force to advance the Kingdom of God and witness the completion of the **Great Commission HARVEST!**

# ADVANCE

*ad·vance*  
*/əd'vans/*

**verb**

*move forward in a purposeful way; make or cause to make progress.*

**noun**

*a forward movement; a development or improvement.*

*"The LORD is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you, He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."*

*Deuteronomy 31:8*

For centuries, ministers have stood in pulpits around the world and proclaimed that we are to advance the Kingdom of God. Were those just idle words? Or are we truly called to advance the Kingdom of God? And if so, what is the role of the Church of God in that process?

The Great Commission, found in Matthew 28:19-20, offers this command: "Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

The Great Commission clearly has a command to advance. We are told to "go." The command given is not only a directive to move forward, but it is a directive to move forward in a purposeful way. We are not to just keep ourselves busy by moving forward. We are to move forward with a purpose of making disciples of all nations. But the command does not stop there.

We are not only commanded to make disciples, but we are also commanded to baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. And then we are commanded to disciple them, teaching them the commandments that have been given to us.

So, the Great Commission is not just simply a command or an instruction to move forward. It is a directive to move forward with purpose.

With that in mind, as we approach the 200th anniversary of the church, what can our movement, the Church of God, do to advance the Kingdom and finish the Great Commission? We have been on this path for well over

a century as a denomination, and for the past six years, we have had a specific focus on finishing the Great Commission. So, what more can we do or should we do as a church?

## **THE SPIRIT-EMPOWERED CHURCH FULFILLING THE GREAT COMMISSION**

It is time that we recognize that the Holy Spirit has empowered our church for this time and this season to fulfill the Great Commission globally. However, mere words are not sufficient to carry out the mandate that we have been given.

It is my desire that the thematic direction of every prayer conference held by a Church of God region or state will be focused on the empowerment that we have been given to fulfill the command of completing and finishing the Great Commission. "The Spirit Empowered Church Fulfilling the Great Commission" must not only be our theme during our prayer conferences and other state/regional meetings, but it must be the directive that we follow in the next 24 months as we seek to produce a harvest of souls. We must release our ministers and laity "to go" and actively engage the Harvest with the prayer and purpose of "covering the earth with the Gospel" by 2030. The objective of Commission '24 – Harvest is to have "a Bible, a believer, and a local church body" in every nation of the world. With a local church presence in 186 countries already, the Church of God is well on the way to blanketing the globe but there are still nations of the world where we do not have a sustained church presence. In the years to come, we will seek to change that status as our global footprint expands.



Several years ago, we set a goal to have over 10 million members in the Church of God within the next decade. By the 200th birthday of the church, we not only must reach that goal but we must exceed it. For our efforts to be successful as a movement, we need to “add to the church daily.” Nothing less is acceptable.

## **ENLARGE OUR NATIONAL AND GLOBAL HARVEST FOOTPRINT**

Every day, anywhere from 350,000 to 400,000 souls are born in the world. Such is the beauty of the Great Commission: there is always opportunity for one more heart to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

The worst of the global COVID pandemic is hopefully behind us. The opportunity to reintroduce hope to a broken world is before us. This isn't the time to shelve ministries or close the church doors. This is the hour for the church to take the Good News to the highways and byways, bidding them all to come.

Our aim is to have a ministry presence in 80 percent of our nation's counties, including the addition of at least 250 churches here in North America. Globally, we want to achieve the addition of 1,000 new churches. If these numbers seem exceedingly large, it's because the need is exceedingly large. The days of a sinner just walking into a church on Sunday to hear the Gospel are all but over. We must put the “GO” in the Great Commission and take the Gospel to the cities and communities where they already live.

As Luther learned, you don't change the world by setting about to change the world. You change your local church, which changes your neighborhood, your county, your state, your nation. Then, you look up one day, and realize we did in fact change our world.

### **1. Refocus on Evangelism**

As a part of our efforts to enlarge our national and global footprint, we must refocus on evangelism. Our movement, as a Pentecostal-based body of believers, has always been focused on evangelism. From the early days when our church was birthed during revival, we have relied upon the fervent fire of revival and evangelism to support and move our church forward.

As we stand on the cusp of a culture that is wanting to cancel those things that we have long held dear, we must push for our evangelistic focus to continue if we are going to be able to reach the millions of lost people who do not know Jesus Christ as their Savior. When our churches lose the desire to have revival, we have lost a great portion of our heritage and our focus on being an evangelistic church. My prayer is that we will not have sporadic revivals break out here and there across our nation and around the world, but that we will have a fervent revival break-out that will change our world and eliminate those demons that have tried to cancel out the Spirit of God for the last few decades. While an evangelistic focus is needed and greatly desired, evangelism alone will not be sufficient to disciple those who come to our churches. We must go another step forward.

### **2. Church Planting Focus**

If we are going to enlarge our national and global footprint, church planting must remain an essential part of our efforts. From its beginning, the Church of God has focused on planting sustainable and life-giving churches. In 2016 we created a church planting office to provide resources and guidance to church planters as they sought to plant and build new churches, as well as to revitalize existing churches. Our focus on church planting cannot waiver, but must grow stronger as we seek to place a Church of God congregation in every neighborhood throughout this country and around the world.

However, our paradigm in planting new churches must be turned upside down. Instead of trying to focus our efforts from the top down, our church planting must begin at the bottom and move up, starting at the district level. Further, our efforts must be location specific. Things that work in one community may not necessarily work in another. We must be willing to be fluid and flexible.

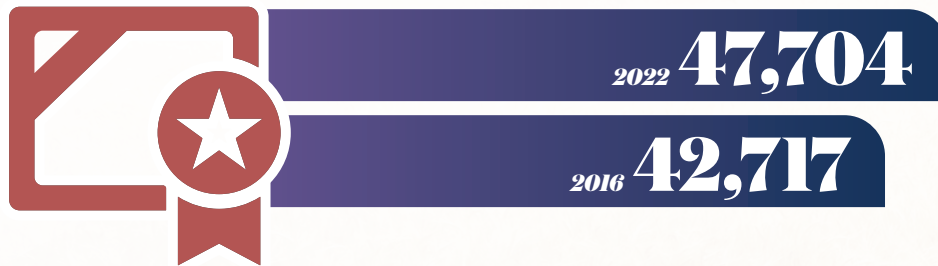
It is important to realize the dynamics of a local church. Every church does not need to be alike or to serve the same cross-section of people. Churches are as different as individuals and have their own DNA. We must recognize that and foster the growth of churches that may not look like the traditional model of a church plant. We must plant churches that meet the needs of every lost soul. We are called to do no less as we advance the Kingdom of God.

**2016-2022**

# HARVEST AND IMPACT REVIEW

WITH CONTINUED DEDICATION TO COMPLETING THE GREAT COMMISSION, CHURCH OF GOD MINISTRIES IN 186 NATIONS HAVE REALIZED THE FOLLOWING MINISTRY OUTCOMES SINCE 2016:

## CREDENTIALLED MINISTERS



**CHURCHES  
WORLDWIDE**

SAVED AND/OR RESTORED: 1,744,125  
 SANCTIFIED: 1,558,124  
 HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISMS: 563,593  
 WATER BAPTISMS: 374,2789

# SPIRITUAL STATISTICS

**1,400**  
**VERIFIED ENGAGEMENTS**

With Unreached People Groups



AUDIO AND VIDEO MINISTRY SPANNING THE GLOBE, INCLUDING *VOICE OF HOPE* RADIO REACHING INTO SIX ARAB NATIONS

## BENEVOLENT DONATIONS

DISASTER RELIEF

**\$5,265,508**

TOTAL BENEVOLENT DONATIONS

**\$584,492,433\***

\*INCLUDES IN-KIND DONATIONS FROM BENEVOLENT MINISTRIES

# ACTIVATE

ac·ti·vate  
/'aktə,vāt/

**verb**  
make (something) active or operative; convert (a substance, molecule, etc.) into a reactive form.

*I will stand my watch and set myself on the rampart, and watch to see what He will say to me, and what I will answer when I am corrected.*

*Then the Lord answered me and said: "Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."*

*Habakkuk 2:1-3*

There is no better example of activation than the discipleship process. One leading another to a saving understanding of Jesus Christ. And then that one leads others to know and appreciate the love of Jesus Christ. It has a multiplication effect that over and over again increases the Kingdom of God.

As a body of believers, our foundational direction for activation is found in the Great Commission. Our challenge is to activate new disciples into witnesses that will then make more new disciples. Again, it is the multiplication effect. The process is to create a situation from which one becomes many. That is at the core of discipleship training, as well as fulfilling and finishing the Great Commission.

Once we have activated and converted these new disciples into a "reactive form," we are well on our way towards the harvest that is promised to the believers. As a collective group of believers, the Church of God must be at the forefront of activating and carrying out the latter day harvest that we have been called to fulfill.

"Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.'" Matthew 9:37

It must not be said by the Master that the laborers within the Church of God are few. We are called to action and the clarion call is strong. We must respond to the Master's calling.

## ENGAGING YOUNG MINISTERS

To multiply our efforts, we must get new workers involved in the harvest. If we are going to accomplish the tasks that the church has been called to in the Great Commission, we need a multitude of young, equipped leaders. In fact, the global Church of God needs thousands more young men and women called into full-time ministry. The objective of Commission '24 – Harvest is to engage, prepare, and credential at least 5,000 ministers globally who are between the ages of 17 to 25, with at least 1,000 of those young ministers in North America.

If we are going to finish the Great Commission, we need a huge army of kingdom-minded and Christ-centered young leaders who are willing to go to the most difficult places in the world with the gospel. One reason the Great Commission is not finished is because it is hard. If it was not

a challenge, it would have been finished centuries ago.

Through our educational institutions around the globe, we must train young leaders to engage our culture and reach those that have been disenfranchised by the world. While academic training is critical, our educational institutions must also focus on discipleship training so that every student who walks out of our schools knows how to lead a person to Christ. These young leaders, with their hopes and aspirations in front of them, must lead the effort to reach the thousands of “unreached people groups” around the globe. It has been said that no one has a right to hear the Gospel twice until everyone has heard it once. However, for us to spread the Word of God around the world, we must have young, energetic leaders participating in this effort.

Not only must we engage these young leaders in our evangelistic efforts, we must credential them through our movement so that additional doors for ministry will be opened. While every young messenger of Christ does not have to have credentials, the Church of God will be blessed and honored to have thousands of young credentialed ministers spreading the Gospel.

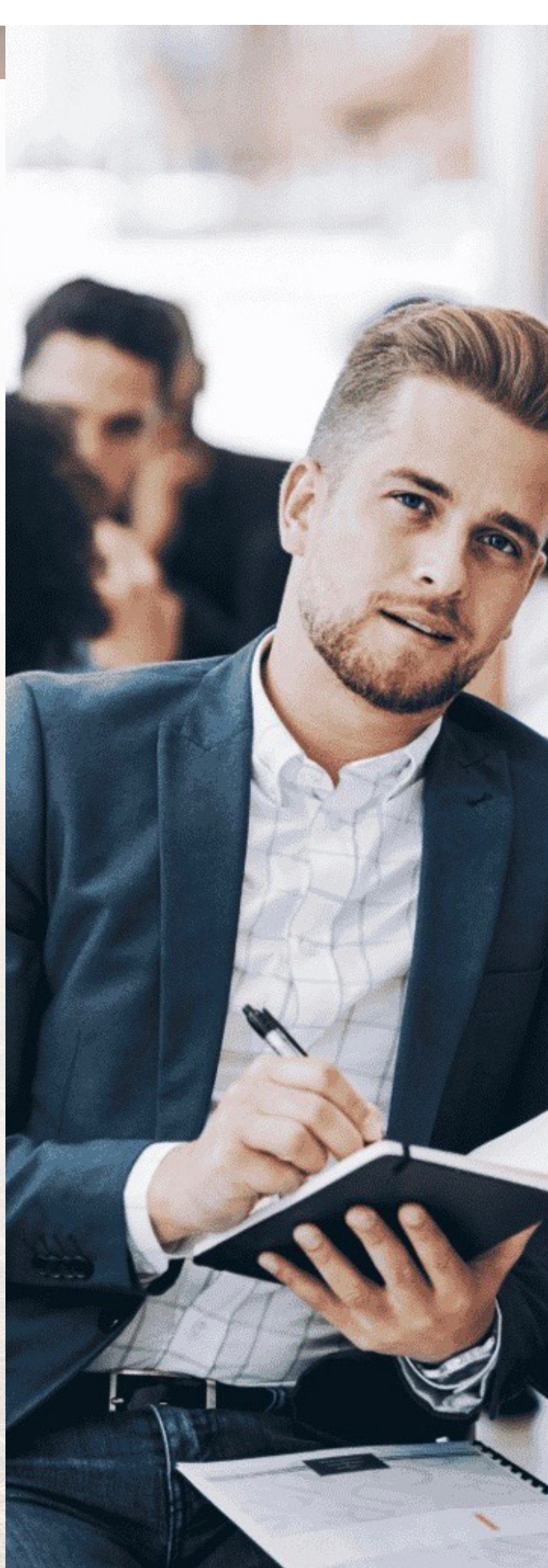
## **INVESTING IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

It has been said repeatedly that an organization rises or falls based upon leadership. Simply put, our structure is as good as our weakest leader. It is important to note that leadership begins with the local church pastor. So, our investment in training and professional development must begin at the local level. While every pastor may not desire to participate in such training, the opportunity must be available to him or her, either free or at a greatly reduced price. The DOE1 platform is a superb beginning for this type of ministerial development and training.

For our state Administrative Bishops and their leadership teams, we must provide enhanced training and development that will assist them in carrying out their duties. That training must also be available to the Administrative Ministries Council and all denominational leaders at the international level.

While solid biblical training is needed, we must go beyond that foundational information and provide financial literacy training, legal guidance, and managerial assistance to all our leaders, especially those that may not have any background in those specialized areas. If not, we will face multiple challenges and much litigation in the future.

Some leaders face the “imposter syndrome” regularly. They wake up many days not knowing how to lead through the challenges that are being thrown their direction. When





LEAD

*"It has been said repeatedly that an organization rises or falls based upon leadership."*

that leader does not have a ready answer, which is often the case, they feel that they are an imposter, just waiting to be found out by those above them. Without question, we must provide sufficient training and invest in our leaders so that they have the resources necessary to face the challenges of a changing culture.

From the local pastor to the Presiding Bishop of the denomination, the challenges will be great as we move forward into the harvest. We cannot allow our leaders to face those challenges without the tools, resources, and qualifications needed to not only survive, but to thrive. To truly activate our leadership, we must invest heavily in their future.

## **KNOW AND LOVE YOUR CHURCH**

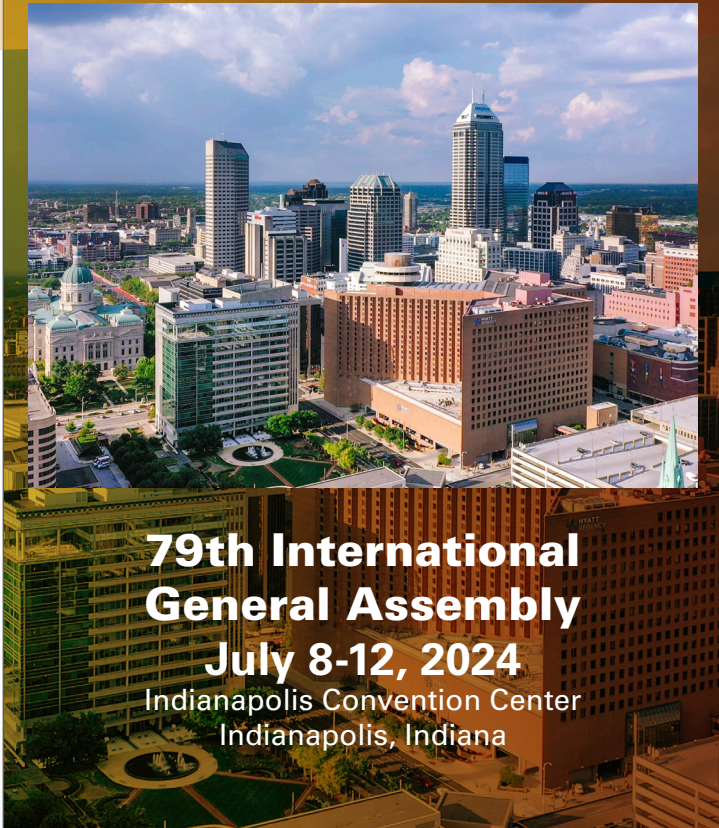
The Church of God Minutes recognize the International General Assembly as the highest governing body of our church. The General Assembly is made up of two deliberative components. First, there is the International General Council which is composed of the ordained bishops of the Church of God. Then, the greater body is the "General Assembly" session. That body is composed of "all members and ministers of the Church of God 16 years of age and above .... present and registered....."

The bylaws of the Church of God state that the purpose of the General Assembly is "to advance the mission, vision, and commitments of the Church of God." In other words, the General Assembly is to be an all encompassing body that provides direction on the future of the church.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic most likely played into the attendance numbers at the 2022 General Assembly, the lack of participation by both ordained bishops and other ministers and laity was somewhat disheartening. For some of the most important votes of the General Council session, no more than 1,600 ordained bishops voted. For the General Assembly session, it is estimated that roughly twice that many ministers and laity participated.

For a movement that has more than 7.5 million members and approximately double that amount in worship attenders, it is concerning when only 3,200 or so people make decisions that impact the entirety of our denomination. While health concerns, costs, and travel restrictions made it difficult for some to attend, we need more people participating in the decision making process at our General Assembly.

Although some would propose that electronic voting is the solution, offering that as a solution might create a "right" without a corresponding "responsibility" - but



**79th International  
General Assembly**  
July 8-12, 2024  
Indianapolis Convention Center  
Indianapolis, Indiana

every option must be considered. In addition, there must be efforts made to encourage live, in-person participation of a cross-section of our church. Every ideological perspective needs to be represented on the General Assembly floor. We can only have a broad and open discussion when we all, as brothers and sisters in Christ, participate and share our positions in love and in unity as we seek to fulfill the Great Commission. Regardless of how it is accomplished, a concerted effort must be made to encourage General Assembly participation by not only our ordained bishops, but also by other credential ministers, as well as laity. We need everyone's ideas and suggestions to advance towards the harvest that God has called us to complete. So, show the church that you care by preparing now to attend the 79th International General Assembly, to be held in Indianapolis, Indiana, on July 8-12, 2024.



# ACHIEVE

*a·chieve*  
*/əˈCHēv/*

*verb*  
*successfully bring about or reach (a desired objective, level, or result) by effort, skill, or courage.*

*Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.*

*1 Corinthians 9:24*

Change the course of church history? Martin Luther couldn't have comprehended such a daunting idea even if he had tried. After all, what can one man truly change in such a big world with so little time?

How, then, did the Father of the Protestant church achieve something so monumental, that it has since survived the 500-year test of time? By focusing on one mission, one achievement, one victory at a time.

The clock of time works against every one of us: every pastor, every leader, every lay person. We see so much that needs to be done, so many souls who need to hear the Gospel of salvation, but Scripture reminds us we have such precious little time. The writer James tells us that our life "is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away."

The easy approach is to live out our allotted time and move onto the next season. The right approach is to maximize the time we have, minimize the distractions, and actualize the vision until we hear the Master say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

What can we do to fulfill the Commission '24 – Harvest objectives when so much remains to be done? We can remember how much Luther accomplished in the approximate six months it took him to write his Ninety-Five Theses and post them on the Door of the Castle Church. It was at that same location in 2017 where I was given the opportunity to declare the six tenets of the FINISH Commitment – Find, Intercede, Network, Invest, Send, and Harvest. If Luther could change the world from there, so can we!

## DEBT ELIMINATION

Through the leadership of previous administrations, the Church of God has some of the nicest and most functional office space in East Tennessee. While there are always needs related to updating technology, the facilities that the Church of God occupies will be able to serve our denomination for decades to come. Our buildings are not only functional, but they are aesthetically pleasing and complement the environment and neighborhood around our campus.

However, the updated and renovated campus came with a price tag. Just two years ago, it was reported that we owed some \$5 million on the balance of the loans for the "new" buildings and the remodeling of the "old" building. In the last two years, we have made significant headway in paying down that debt. As of August 31, 2022, there was \$1.79 million remaining on the indebtedness on the entire campus.

With the money that has been going toward debt reduction and the elimination of other recently targeted liabilities, the Church of God will be able to put an estimated \$200,000 per month into church planting and evangelism - or about \$2.5 million a year. With an escalated debt repayment plan, at least half of this money will be available by early 2024, if not sooner.

Kingdom resources are precious and must be utilized for the advancement of the Kingdom. A great harvest can be reaped as we direct these Kingdom resources into vital ministries.



*"To have a renewal in every aspect of our lives and ministry efforts, and to fulfill the Commission '24 – Harvest objectives, we must have a return to daily Bible reading, consistent prayer, and a lifestyle of Christian witness."*

## **FIVE KEYS TO RENEWAL**

To have a renewal in every aspect of our lives and ministry efforts, and to fulfill the Commission '24 – Harvest objectives, we must have a return to daily Bible reading, consistent prayer, and a lifestyle of Christian witness. We can accomplish such through the following five action steps:

### **1. Community Evangelism and Benevolence**

The Church of God, at its core, is a grassroots movement. From our humble beginnings at Barney Creek and Shearer Schoolhouse, to a missionary who burned his boat on the shores of the Bahamas, we have reached 186 nations in the world by achieving evangelism, one community, one city block at a time.

The local church that reaches its city, through both evangelism and benevolence, is the most powerful force in all the Church of God. It's the week-long revival where our friends and neighbors experience the Pentecostal power of God for the first time. It's the Vacation Bible School that teaches the neighborhood children about the love of Jesus in ways they never knew. It's the faithful members who take the hope and compassion of Jesus to their schools, their workplaces, and their family gatherings. It is also providing backpacks filled with food for children to take home from school on weekends; water, food, and other essentials after a devastating storm; and shelter to the young family that has no one to care for them.

None of us can reach the world all by ourselves. But all of us can reach someone where we live. To achieve community evangelism and benevolence, it takes every one of us asking ourselves the question: "How many chairs am I willing to take responsibility for at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb?" How many unreached people groups will you adopt? How many souls will you help to win? Everyone has a role in filling every seat we can at heaven's table. The harvest isn't always on the other side of the planet; most

times, it sits across from us at the supper table or on the pew next to us in church.

### **2. Personal Discipleship**

Winning souls to Jesus is paramount to advancing the Kingdom of God. But, it's not the actual goal of the Great Commission.

"Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations ..." We celebrate every convert we reach, because even the angel's band rejoices in heaven when a single soul comes to God. But, to stop there is to abort the mission before our work is done. Conversion creates believers; personal discipleship creates followers who become leaders.

We must be as intentional in discipling believers as we are in making believers. The resources available to us are limitless. The Church of God publishing house, Pathway Press, has a curriculum for all ages. Our local churches can launch small groups, new beginner classes in Sunday School, and accountability partnership programs. Our state and regional offices can provide training for pastors and lay leaders in the art of discipleship.

Jesus began His mission of building a church by making disciples. We can achieve His mission when we commit to doing the same. This is how one becomes two, two becomes four, and the multiplication process expands all the world over.

### **3. World Missions**

Another key objective of the Commission '24 – Harvest is to see beyond our own home and nation and recognize there remains a world to be reached for Jesus. We so anticipate the return of Christ – we preach about it, sing about it, and pray for it often as we see our world fall further into moral decay.

And when will Jesus return? According to the words of Jesus, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the



end come.” (Matthew 24:14) How shall they believe except they hear? And how shall they hear except a preacher be sent?

In the years to come, there is so much we can achieve together as we seek to preach the Gospel in every nation. Some of us can answer the call to be missionaries around the world. Others can participate in short-term missionary terms to evangelize unreached people groups. All of us can commit to financially and prayerfully supporting those in the latter two groups. Regardless of which manner is chosen, your participation in World Missions is vital.

#### **4. Student Engagement**


The Millennial Generation is counted as the most unchurched group in American history. We cannot, and will not, stand by and watch another generation walk away from

the hope of Christ.

It’s not even that Generation Z is walking out our doors – they overwhelmingly aren’t walking in the door to begin with. If we are to engage students today, we have to find ways to go to them. It’s setting up youth Bible studies at coffee shops, or volunteering at our local schools.

Student engagement also requires utilizing the students we already have. It’s helping them identify their gifts and talents in Christ, equipping them to fulfill their calling and empowering them to walk in that calling. This means giving students more than a seat at the table; it’s giving them a voice as well. We must engage them in dialogue, and be willing to answer the tough questions.

The truth is, this generation is not nearly as interested in the Big Show with neon lights and smoke machines as students used to be. This is a generation that is craving



authentic relationships. The COVID closures robbed them of community. With anxiety and depression at terrifying levels, so many students just want someone who notices and affirms their value.

Sometimes, we can achieve our goal simply by taking a few moments to listen and be there for them. If we don't engage with students in meaningful ways, you can be assured the world will, and we will be left talking about how we lost another generation.

## **5. Spiritual Renewal**

In a politically divided and culturally divisive world, we can all agree on one thing: the past few years have been exhausting and frustrating beyond degree.

Even the best of the best have heard enough of the catchphrases, such as "social distancing," "Zoom," and "out of an abundance of caution." Our pastors are tired. Our members are worn out. Our leaders are confounded.

If we are to catch our second wind, we need a fresh wind of the Holy Spirit to breathe in our churches, and into our souls, to strengthen and renew us for the task at hand. If we wait a few years to achieve this, not all of us will still remain in the ranks to enjoy its fruits. Already, we have lost too many to the grave, and even more into retirement or sudden exit from ministry.

The Church of God must prioritize spiritual renewal in our personal lives and corporate movement. We can achieve this through retreats, revivals and special services. We achieve this by emphasizing personal renewal in the prayer closet at home, and the reading table with Scripture. We can encourage every believer to rediscover the spiritual renewal that comes through the daily discipline of time spent with Christ.

When drought and famine came to Israel in the days of Elijah, revival didn't begin with the cutting down of his enemies at the brook of Kishon at Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18). It began when Elijah rebuilt the altar and cried unto God, and fresh fire fell from heaven and renewed a nation! We need to rebuild the altars!



# Harvest COMMISSION 2024

LABORERS TOGETHER FOR GREAT COMMISSION COMPLETION



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